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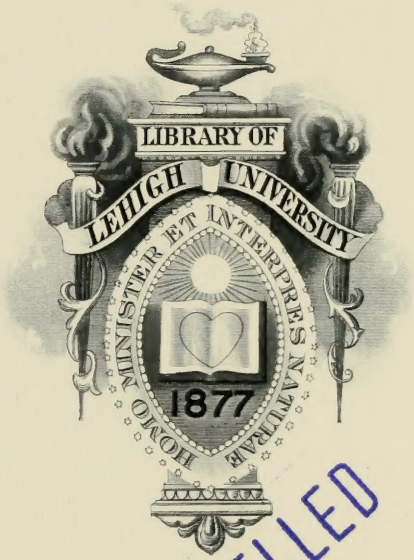
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# A Cabinet of Gems

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## *Short Stories from the English Annuals*

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES, BY

Bradford Allen Booth

*As take a straw, and throw it up into the Air, you shall see by that which way the Wind is, which you shall not do by casting up a stone. More solid things do not show the Complexion of the times so well.*

JOHN SELDEN

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TO

PERCY MARKS

WHO WRITES BETTER STORIES

THAN THESE

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# Preface

TO FORESTALL CENSURE *of one's book by candidly admitting its shortcomings is a judicious, if somewhat cowardly, maneuver. But though it disarms criticism, it does not, my publishers warn me, promote a brisk sale. Nevertheless, in the interests of both integrity and self-defense, I owe to exoteric reader and learned critic alike a prefatory word of explanation and apology.*

*Let us come to an understanding of the rather exotic title which, with such a jaunty air of braggadocio, this collection of stories wears. With all assurance an editor of an English annual would have pronounced this volume a cabinet of gems, confident that an eager public would note no discrepancy between promise and performance. The present editor is not so sanguine.*

*But without further ado I am willing to throw these never reprinted and consequently forgotten works of yet remembered writers on the judgment of the modern reader, certain that they have more than historical importance to recommend them. Today the technique of the short story is intricate and elaborate, and by comparison the art of Lockhart, Galt, and Hogg is crude and undeveloped; but these writers are not without compensatory virtues. In their work one finds a subdued humor, a level-headed kindliness of outlook, and a manly sanity. It is my hope that present-day readers may recapture some of the pleasure which these stories afforded in a simpler and quieter age.* B.A.B.

University of California at Los Angeles, March 1, 1938.

# Introduction

THE TEMPER OF AN AGE is rarely to be discovered in the pages of its greatest writers, for genius has a way of working out its salvation quite apart from the accident of time and place. That is not to say that Milton, for example, was unmoved by the harrowing days of the Commonwealth and by the post-bellum reaction of the Restoration,—to the contrary; but the social historian finds the writings of Samuel Pepys, William Wycherley, and John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, more to his purpose. Similarly, he does not read John Keats to discover what manner of men were our great-grandfathers. No, the truly gifted is an egoist, intent on probing his own emotions, spinning out his fancies, giving to the splendid vision which fills his soul the reality of artistic expression. He does not, to employ a hard-worked phrase, have his finger on the pulse of the people. His work is *not* of an age. If we would know the spirit of the time as it is expressed in literature, we should best examine what was ephemeral. The lists of best sellers and the figures of the circulating libraries are more accurate indices of the general cultural level and the range of public interest than the isolated splendor of a few genuine masterpieces.

In this regard there was no more significant literary phenomenon in the second quarter of the nineteenth century than the spectacular rise of annual gift books. These anthologies of original prose and verse were compiled by editors whose sole intent was to produce a book of wide, popular appeal, a book which would *sell;* and to this end

they were given *carte blanche*. Publishers beat their tom-toms furiously, pressed into service elegant engravers, bought thousands of yards of watered-silk binding;[1]* and their editors dunned the great literary men of the period for contributions. The pages of these forgotten books resound with the names of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Scott, Maria Edgeworth, Southey, Thackeray, Landor, Disraeli, Bulwer-Lytton, Dickens, Fitzgerald, Moore, Tennyson, Ruskin, the Brownings, *et al.;* in short, almost every writer of importance. The public was impressed, vastly impressed, and fought to buy copies at a guinea each. Scott declared that the bookselling world was mad over annuals, and that there were so many Bijoux, Albums, and Souvenirs that any man with a literary flair could make a comfortable living writing for them alone.[2] There have been few such successful attempts to interest the great mass of the people in literature, and a consideration of the results provides an important chapter in the history of nineteenth-century taste.

The annuals did not suddenly spring up full blown, nor for that matter was the flower indigenous to England. German Almanachs and Taschenbuchs had enjoyed a long, dignified, and even distinguished career before businesslike Rudolph Ackerman, an enterprising publisher interested in the fine arts, had his inspiration. Why not, asked this opportunist, capitalize on the popularity of an already proved item? He commissioned Frederick Shoberl to send up a trial balloon, and in the late fall of 1822 appeared *The Forget-Me-Not*, the first English annual.[3] In his preface the editor sounds off smugly.

* Superior figures refer to notes which will be found on pages 403-406.

The British Public is here presented with the first attempt to rival the numerous and elegant publications of the Continent, expressly designed to serve as tokens of remembrance, friendship, or affection, at that season of the year which ancient custom has particularly consecrated to the interchange of such memorials. The Publisher flatters himself that as well from the nature of the literary department, in which it has been his aim to unite the agreeable with the useful, as from the execution of the graphic embellishments, this first volume of the FORGET-ME-NOT will be deemed not unworthy of the purpose for which it is intended.[4]

The attractive little 12mo. volume, in ornamental paper cover and cardboard slip cover, contains, in addition to the purely literary material, poetical illustrations of the twelve months, a census of important cities, vital statistics, and a historical register. For most of this matter the editor acknowledges indebtedness to the *Gotha Almanac*. Ackerman's first *Forget-Me-Not* could not make up its mind whether to be a handbook of useful information or a literary miscellany; its cautious publisher temporized. To another and bolder spirit than his was left the distinction of courageously eliminating the encyclopedic impedimenta.

The *Forget-Me-Not* was highly successful. But if Ackerman congratulated himself on having carved out and appropriated sole rights to a lucrative business, he failed to consider the sedulous-ape instinct among English publishers. The very next year two formidable rivals offered to contest the field. An advertisement which appeared in newspapers and periodicals late in 1823 announced on behalf of Lupton Relfe, a London bookseller, a new publication, *Friendship's Offering, or the Annual Remem-*

*brancer*. It was described, as were all subsequent annuals, as "a Christmas Present and a New Years' Gift."

This little volume, in addition to the usual pocket-book information, contains a series of highly finished continental views by artists of the first eminence, two very splendid emblazoned title-pages, a presentation plate and other embellishments. It contains also a new Tale of Temper, several original poems by Mrs. Opie, songs, quadrilles. Intended to imitate the long and highly celebrated continental pocketbooks.

The second of the new aspirants for public favor was Hurst and Robinson's *The Graces, or Literary Souvenir*, a volume which does not call for special comment. But the next annual from this publishing house was destined, under the aegis of Alaric Alexander Watts, to enjoy astonishing success. Issued as *The Literary Souvenir, or Cabinet of Poetry and Romance*, it reflected the happy originality and shrewd judgment of its editor. Watts ("poeta non minor sed minimus"), a man of literary taste as well as business acumen, could not tolerate the two sustaining features of the early annual. To his skeptical publishers he proposed abolishing the tables of statistics and the suggestions for parlor amusement, and he harried out such an imposing group of contributors that they were at last forced to give somewhat reluctant and apprehensive consent.

One only need glance at the circulation figures of *The Literary Souvenir* to note how ill founded were the publishers' fears. An edition of six thousand was pounced on by an eager public and carried triumphantly away within two weeks. Next year, gloated the publishers, the market should absorb ten thousand copies. Nor were they

wrong; indeed, circulation soon exceeded fifteen thousand, a highly creditable figure for a volume priced at twelve shillings.

The gates were up, and the race was on! Late entries that missed the getaway appeared in the costliest silks and attempted to make up the handicap by reliance on the most popular jockeys. Chief among these gallant steeds was *The Keepsake*, wearing the colors of Charles Heath, noted engraver. This annual began its brilliant course with the issue for 1828. Gaudiest and most pretentious of its kind, *The Keepsake* flaunted a garish binding and advertised with pride its full score of sententious engravings, some of the smallest of which had cost the publisher as much as a hundred and fifty pounds. One is led to believe that these "embellishments" were more appreciated than the literary contents; and, indeed, many annuals bring respectable prices at the auction rooms today simply because of the engravings. At a guinea a copy, *The Keepsake* catered to a select clientele. To hold the aristocratic readers, Heath engaged as editor Lady Emily Stuart Wortley. This bluestocking drew contributions from a wide circle of titled friends. For example: *The Keepsake* for 1837, which I happen to have before me, contains articles not only from Alfred Tennyson ("St. Agnes' Eve"), Mary Shelley, and Edward Fitzgerald, but also from Lady Dacre, the Countess of Blessington, Lord Nugent, the Marquess of Granby, Lady Charlotte St. Maur, Lord John Manners, Lord A. Conyngham, the Marquess of Londonderry, Lord William Lennox, Viscount Ranelagh, Lord William Graham, General Grosvenor, and Archdeacon Spencer! The serene dignity of

these names, coupled with those which that persuasive creature the Countess of Blessington garnered for her *Book of Beauty*, served to perpetuate the annual as a form long after it had entered upon the tottering days of its senility. But I am anticipating my story.

The single annual for 1823 was succeeded by three for 1824 and nine for 1825. For nearly a decade the number steadily increased; in 1831, booksellers' shelves bulged with sixty-two Tokens of Affection, Pledges of Friendship, and Gems of Loveliness. Most of these productions could have interested only the most mawkishly sentimental and exotically romantic. There was the *Remember Me*, *The Nosegay*, *The Bow in the Cloud*, the *Gage d'Amitié*, the *May You Like It*, the *Love's Offering*, the *Tid-bit*, *The Olive Branch*, *The Phrenological Bijou*, *The Mirror of the Graces*, et cetera. Such was the ingenuity of publishers in providing annuals for every esoteric taste that bookstalls swarmed with landscape annuals, historical annuals, missionary annuals, military and naval annuals, geographical annuals, musical annuals, botanical annuals, Oriental annuals, Continental annuals, comic annuals, juvenile annuals, and even an infant annual! Provincial publishers appealed to local pride with *The Renfrewshire Annual*, *The Yorkshire Literary Annual*, *The Manchester Keepsake;* national feeling was expected to prompt the purchase of *The English Annual*, *The Scottish Annual*, *The Hibernian Keepsake;* even *The Bengal Annual* from Calcutta, and *The Australian Souvenir* from Sydney. There were annuals named for flowers: *The Rose*, *The Iris*, *The Amaranth;* and annuals named for precious stones: *The Emerald*, *The Amethyst*, *The Ruby*.

Even during its heyday the annual was decried vehemently, but not its bitterest critic could say that its moral tone was subversive. The keepsake was a gift which one presented to one's mother, sister, or sweetheart; indeed, publishers sometimes provided a namby-pamby frontispiece on which the donor could inscribe his name, together with that of the fortunate recipient, and add an appropriate sentiment.[5] The annual was a table book, too. With it one impressed one's neighbors. Naturally, it must reflect the tender nature of its owner. It must mirror the conventional standards and established virtues: for king and country, home and family, morality and the Church of England. Truly, the annuals comprise the most decorous body of secular literature ever produced. At first the letterpress was simply, like Caesar's wife, above reproach; soon, however, it could not resist the delightful opportunity to combine imaginative stimulation and a Sunday School lesson.

> The especial object of "The Amulet" is to blend religious instruction with literary amusement; so that every article it contains shall bear, either directly or indirectly, some moral lesson which may impress itself strongly on the mind by means of the pleasing language and interesting form in which it is conveyed; for it is not sufficient that our amusements should be merely harmless, when they may, with so much effect, be made to forward the grand end and aim of our being.[6]

The success of *The Amulet* flushed a covey of Sacred Irises, Christian Keepsakes, and Spiritual Gleaners. These were shortly joined by an odd flock of denominational birds: *The Protestant Annual*, *The Friends' Annual*, *The Wesleyan Juvenile Offering*. Churchmen from Land's End

to John o' Groats reached for their quills. Life and love became in their pale pages magically simplified; the former a renunciation of the grosser appetites, the latter a fleshless adoration of spirituality. Demure maidens swooned, and strong men wept: virtue was rewarded, and villainy reformed.

The amazing proliferation of annuals is probably the chief cause of their rapid decline. Public support and the fecundity of British literary talent might have served a dozen volumes,—perhaps even a score,—but when sixty-odd fought for attention, the deserving were buried with the undeserving. It was a free-for-all with nothing barred, and when the smoke cleared away, all the combatants were prostrated. Editors, distracted by a lack of distinctive material, had been forced to call attention to their publications by securing one or two "big names"; then pad the remainder of the volume with watered stock picked up for nothing from amateurs or miserable hacks, —a stratagem not unknown to modern journalism. The public can be fooled part of the time only. By 1840 the "annual" bubble had burst. A few, such as *The Keepsake* and *The Book of Beauty*, hung on grimly for some time, but they were simply putting on a brave front, attempting to outface apathy and oblivion. *The Keepsake*, it should be noted, fared better than its fellows and maintained a decent standard until its demise in 1857. By that time, its reign there was none to dispute. But no one cared. There had been thirty issues: 1828-1857. Only the *Forget-Me-Not* with twenty-five issues challenged its title as the foremost annual.

In connection with the waning popularity of the Eng-

lish annual it is interesting to note the growth of its American counterpart. *The Atlantic Souvenir* for 1826 led off a parade which, though somewhat straggly and slow in forming, eventually comprised thirty units in a single year and stretched over a period of nearly four decades. It was not until 1850, however, that the ranks were fullest. Hawthorne, Poe, Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Irving, Bryant, and other well-known writers are represented, but in general the letterpress ranges from a harmless banality to a most reprehensible sentimentality. Many annuals were shamelessly eclectic; in fact, of the thirty appearing in 1850 only six were made up entirely of original material. Ralph Thompson in his recent exhaustive study of American annuals lists 465 distinct volumes. In view of this figure it is something less than amusing to note that the 1936 special Christmas number of *Town and Country* is solemnly described as America's "First Christmas Annual."

About ten years after the English gift books had gone the way of all ephemera, there developed another and very different kind of annual. This was a paper-bound volume which sold for a shilling,—in contrast to the guinea which its ornate ancestor brought. It printed much more prose than verse (some of the gift annuals had published verse only), and seldom wrote down to a parlor audience. Some, however, seem to have been simply an extra Christmas number of an established periodical.[7] For these volumes no mere purge of literary leftovers would do; the lists of contributors are often impressive and the contents solid throughout. *The Belgravia Annual*, *The Gentleman's Annual*, *Warne's Christmas Annual*, *Routledge's Christ-*

*mas Annual, Arrowsmith's Christmas Annual,* and others, seem to have found a responsive public. The stories by Wilkie Collins, Trollope, and W. S. Gilbert that are reprinted here were discovered among these rare volumes.

"For God's sake," thunders Charles Lamb, "do not let me be pestered with Annuals. They are all rogues who edit them, and something else who write in them."[8] Bulwer-Lytton, replying to an editorial request from Lady Blessington, sternly refuses: "I cannot disguise from you that I have strong objections to writing for an annual."[9] Thomas Moore scorns a lucrative commission: "My name would suffer."[10] Scott will have no traffic with them. Wordsworth will not write for *The Keepsake* unless Coleridge makes the volume respectable by adding his name.[11] Coleridge himself calls annuals "Gaudy Books";[12] Lockhart calls them "painted bladders."[13] Ruskin suggests that an intelligently edited annual is not only an anomaly but also a certain failure.[14] "The annuals," growls Thackeray, "tend to encourage bad taste in the public."[15] Why then do the names of these indignant gentlemen appear so frequently as contributors? A banknote has long had the power to dissipate even the most righteous of scruples, and none of these authors was above winking at his principles to turn an honest penny.

The annuals, when they paid, paid well. Scott drew £500 for four papers in *The Keepsake.* Subsequently, he refused as insufficient an offer of £400 for a 70-page contribution and £800 to assume the editorship of the volume.[16] Moore was promised £700 for the same job; he too would have none of it. Nor did the prospect of a hundred guineas for a hundred lines of poetry tempt him. He

needed the money desperately; but even the prospect of £600 for 120 pages could not at the time cajole him from his stubborn resolution. Later, however, he capitulated.[17] Coleridge received £50 for two little poems for *The Keepsake*, "more than all, I ever made by all my Publications."[18] Other literary men were occasionally blessed with similar good fortune. But more often they found themselves humbugged by slippery editors or boldly swindled by pirates. Herein, of course, lies the chief reason for the swelling chorus of protest against the annual genre. Lamb concludes one of his vitriolic tirades significantly: "The sight of one of those year books makes me sick. I get nothing by any of 'em, not even a copy."[19] While Coleridge was engaged in preparing a new volume for the press, *The Bijou* appeared [1828] with four poems (including "The Wanderings of Cain") that he had intended to print himself. Coleridge was justifiably furious, for not only had he never heard of that particular annual, but its publishers had printed garbled versions of the poems; to cap it all, they had added an impudent preface of "thanks to Mr. Coleridge for his liberality"![20] Southey complains that, though after 1828 he was accustomed to receive £10 or £12 for a poem, at first he was expected to give his work gratis. Besides, he continues, the popularity of the annuals has halved the sale of his own books.[21] Yes, the top-flight literary men suffered more than chagrin as they watched an uncritical public gobble unpalatable "annual" fare.

If the literary contributions of the annuals seem to be uninspired, there was occasionally sufficient reason. Editors were addicted to the unfortunate habit of sending an

engraving to a promised contributor and requesting a poem or story to match. Now and again, as in Coleridge's exquisite "Garden of Boccaccio," the result was happy; but more often such an assignment vitiated whatever spirit the author might have brought to his work. The subject-matter which appealed to the genius of the engravers was so severely circumscribed that the hapless authors were forced to tread the same mill year after year. Under such circumstances originality was a rare quality; unimaginative publishers made it a hazardous one.

The conventional figure for an "embellishment" was a petite and starry-eyed maiden in gigot sleeves and "raven tresses." She had a Scarlett O'Hara waist, bell-shaped skirts, and the tiniest of slippers, surmounted by the daintiest of bows. Thackeray describes her as follows:

> . . . enormous eyes—a tear, perhaps, upon each cheek, and an exceedingly low-cut dress—pats a greyhound or weeps into a flower-pot, or delivers a letter to a bandy-legged, curly-headed page. An immense train of white satin fills up one corner of the plate; an urn, a stone railing, a fountain, and a bunch of hollyhocks adorn the other; the picture is signed Sharpe, Parris, Corbould, Corbaux, Jenkins, Brown, as the case may be, and is entitled, 'the Pearl,' 'la Dolorosa,' 'la Biondina,' 'le Gage d'Amour,' 'the Forsaken One of Florence,' 'the Water-lily,' or some such name.[22]

This is precise reporting, not hyperbole! But though one questions whether or not the engravers deserved the handsome fees they exacted, yet, in justice to one or two, satisfactory results must in a few of their works be admitted. Even Thackeray, always satirical when discussing art in the annuals, observed that *The Keepsake* contained some

fine plates;[23] Sir Walter Scott thought them "beyond comparison beautiful."[24] Even the sorriest of the annuals served the commendable purpose of offering encouragement to tyros who otherwise would have lacked a market for their wares. Nevertheless, as Thackeray points out, they achieved their recognition by prostituting themselves to public inclination—or perhaps one should say proprietory inclination, though the two are synonymous.

That the art was pedestrian is, however, only a humble remonstrance in the hierarchy of charges to which the annual was vulnerable. A graver consideration—that of the purely literary blemishes—is more to the purpose here. The annuals brought about their own extinction: first, by opening the sluice gates of sentimentality and allowing the torrent to rage unchecked; second, by indulging in the most absurd romanticism; and third, by drowning the few distinguished papers in a welter of literary drivel.

There is no surer axiom in the business of bookmaking than that whoever would win popular success must deal heavily in sentimentality. The twentieth century, significant for its unabashed skepticism and realistic approach to modes and manners, has nevertheless chosen as its novelist, Gene Stratton Porter; as its poet, Edgar Guest. It is not surprising, then, that in an age dedicated to faith and conventional principles of life, excessive sentimentality approached its zenith in quantity, its nadir in quality.

The annuals were concocted for the middle-class public—rising burghers and ambitious housewives eager, by evincing an interest in art and literature, to give the home an atmosphere of culture and refinement. Neither the upper nor the lower classes fell prey to the sententious

twaddle which was the annuals' chief stock-in-trade; the former because they knew better by instinct, the latter because life forced on them truer conceptions of what is genuine and what is sham. No; it was to the vast and potent group of commercial commoners that solemn authors addressed themselves in lugubrious ode and lachrymose sonnet.

A few titles will suffice to indicate to what bathos a dignified annual could fall: "The Orphan's Lament," "A Dying Mother's Dirge," "To an infant sleeping on its mother's breast during a storm," "Lines, written on placing a lily of the valley in the dead hand of a child," "Impromptu on seeing a sable vest thrown casually over a lady's harp, which had for some time been mute and untouched, owing to her indisposition." From the most distinguished pens came verse of the sort; Lamb contributed his "On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born,"[25] a poem of some restraint and beauty, but in its subject significant of a lamentable trend.

The usual literary piece for the annuals, while by no means equaling the absurdity of those cited, nevertheless reflects a facet or two of the sentimental mood. Authors dealt widely in the romance of far-off Utopias, retailing innocuous stories of idyllic love and heroic sacrifice. They glanced at the engraving which their verses were to illustrate, noted the Byronic ladies and gentlemen, and proceeded to emasculate the native traditions of Venice, the Pyrenees, the Apennines, Greece, or Turkey for the holiday trade and the parlor table. Unfortunately, originality was not a virtue of the gift books, and by their uniform prettiness they laid themselves open to such attacks as

the following by Thackeray, who comments acidly on the saccharine lines which accompany the "embellishment":

> Miss Landon, Miss Mitford, or my lady Blessington, writes a song upon the opposite page, about a water-lily, stilly, shivering beside a streamlet, plighted, blighted, love benighted, falsehood sharper than a gimlet, lost affection, recollection, cut connexion, tears in torrents, true-love token, spoken, broken, sighing, dying, girl of Florence, and so on. The poetry is quite worthy of the picture, and a little sham sentiment is employed to illustrate a little sham art.[26]

Not that Thackeray didn't respect the talented authoresses he here castigates,—far from it. Miss Mitford is "a lady of exquisite wit and taste. . . . [She] has made the English reader pass so many pleasant hours that we must pardon a few dull ones."[27] Miss Landon he rebukes for lowering herself to a dirty business. But had he known what heroic sacrifices these charming women were making to support incompetents, he could hardly have been severe with their least happy productions. His point, however, is that their work for the annuals is *not always* their best. The only excuse for the present volume is that it *sometimes* is. Neither Thackeray nor any other critic seems to be aware that amongst all the dross of labored romance and mawkish sentiment there are a few gems of purest ray serene. Some of these I have here attempted to cull from their dusty and forgotten repositories.

An effective device of argumentation is to disarm the opposition by admitting at the outset all their valid points. That strategy has perhaps been run into the ground in an effort to adduce *all* the con arguments. It would be unfortunate, however, if it should act as a boomerang, for

the annuals have had many detractors, few apologists; and one of the purposes of this brief survey is to enumerate some of the services which they performed.

The chief service of the annuals is the fillip which they gave to the emergence of the modern short story. There are several reasons why in the early nineteenth century fiction of the briefer sort languished: first, the age was primarily one of poetry; second, publishers favored from writers of fiction only the three-volume novel; third, there was no medium to market the short story. On the last of these considerations the annuals worked a significant change. Where before there had been only a handful of popular magazines, the majority of which were interested only in serial fiction, there now arose a concourse of elaborate gift books, appealing perhaps to not altogether admirable qualities in the public taste, but nevertheless financially solid and eager to bargain with anyone who could tell an interesting story in fewer than three thousand words. Now reputation was unnecessary; anyone with ambition could obtain a hearing. Literature prospers under such healthy conditions.

The exigencies of the new form necessitated a change in technique. But a satisfactory formula was not hit upon at once, and the public suffered apathy when the elaborate compounds of the experimenters turned out to be impotent. Chronic complaint was plot trouble. Practitioners like Mary Shelley, long accustomed to doctoring the novel, could concoct no literary panacea to cure the distress of the short story. The result was that, with an intricate plot forced into the narrow framework of the short story, their uncertain attempts read like summar-

ized novels. But even the best of novels are vapid and unconvincing in summary, for there can be no characterization and little motivation. Mrs. Shelley frets at the brevity and concision which the annuals require, and in so doing probably mirrors the attitude of most of her contemporaries: "When I write for them, I am worried to death to make my things shorter and shorter, till I fancy people think ideas can be conveyed by intuition, and that it is a superstition to consider words necessary for their expression."[28] She obviously does not see the focal point of the trouble, which is not in the development but in the plot itself. Had she taken the hint from Mary Russell Mitford, whose charming village sketches sedulously avoid complexity of plot, the difficulty would have been resolved. Perhaps, too, she might have learned to let passion, not Frankenstein, spin the plot.

There is little fiction in the English annuals which conforms to Poe's famous definition of the short story. The preconceived and carefully wrought "effect" which he counseled in his review of Hawthorne's *Twice-told Tales* (most of which, by the way, first appeared in American annuals) is rarely to be observed. Perhaps the supernatural stories from their very nature most nearly approximate Poe's ideal. But the majority, especially in the early days of the annuals, danced the old solemn routine of romance, sacrifice, devotion, and filial piety, designed and directed with no other effect in mind than the purely didactic.

Late in his career Wilkie Collins evolved a nine-word formula for the perfect short story, and it has never been bettered: "Make 'em laugh, make 'em cry, make 'em wait." The drift of the annuals' fiction was toward this

destination, but the current was often sluggish. At the outset, humor was conceived to be so foreign to the serious purposes of the annuals that separate publications were established where Tom Hood and others could appear in lighter vein. Later, humorous dialect stories in "braid Scots" and Irish were admitted; but even to the last levity was the exception, not the rule. If I have written to any purpose, it is already abundantly evident that many a hot tear stained the watered silk of the annuals; in this regard, however, the fiction is less culpable than the poetry, but it is simply a matter of degree. Nearly all the narratives for the annuals achieved a modicum of suspense; occasionally the bare bones of structure protrude too obviously, and more often the dénouement is effected unconvincingly, but generally speaking there is little complaint on this score.

With all their imperfections on their heads, the annuals contributed a very definite service in their time. They interested in literature a class of people which could have been attracted in no other way. They encouraged young writers like Ruskin by providing an outlet for their work. By enlisting public curiosity they did much to advance the cause of the short story, and by quickly exhausting the meager possibilities of orthodox plotting they assisted in the development of its specialized technique. And, finally, they published many articles of unqualified merit; some of these have been incorporated in the collected works of their authors, others have been buried away in faded and forgotten annuals for more than a century.

There are at least two valid reasons why the following stories should be revived: first, they illustrate the taste

of a past age and should therefore interest the student of manners and the social historian; second, and more important, they are the productions of authors of acknowledged talent and with one exception have hitherto been available only in their rare originals. I have never had much sympathy with those who contend that the lesser works of distinguished literary men should best remain inaccessible. That the author is entitled to be estimated by his finest work admits no serious disputation; but the ways of genius are strange and inscrutable, and not only every manuscript but every scrap of information that might lead to a fuller, more accurate interpretation of the forces which shaped his mind and imagination should be both treasured and subjected to the most painstaking scrutiny.

Let us remember Trollope for *Barchester Towers*, Wilkie Collins for *The Moonstone*, Mrs. Shelley for *Frankenstein;* but if beside those masterpieces we place "Christmas Day at Kirkby Cottage," "Your Money or Your Life," and "The Trial of Love," we may perhaps learn something about our authors which we had not suspected. If we are reminded only that

> God moves in a mysterious way
> His wonders to perform . . .

we have chanced on a heartening thought, full of inspiration for the least of us.

B.A.B.

# Moustache

*By* John Gibson Lockhart

From *The Janus*, 1826

*Arma Canemque Cano*

# John Gibson Lockhart

JOHN GIBSON LOCKHART (1794-1854), *longtime editor of* THE QUARTERLY REVIEW, *is almost forgotten today as a poet and writer of popular fiction; but his Life of his father-in-law, Sir Walter Scott, is generally recognized as one of the finest examples of the biographic art which the English language can boast. Lockhart was associated for many years with John Wilson ("Christopher North"), editor of* BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE, *both as contributor and as frequent collaborator on Wilson's famous feature "Noctes Ambrosianae." In* 1825 *they noted the growing popularity of the annual and determined to publish some of their fugitive papers in that form.* THE JANUS *carried many good articles—too good, in fact, for mass consumption, and the authors reaped only chagrin for their labors. This little tale, based on a French original, is a pleasant interlude in Lockhart's more serious Scottish and Roman fiction.*

# Moustache*

MONTAIGNE has given a whole essay to war-horses, and celebrated, with his usual talent, the prowess of the various steeds who have, in different ages of the world, "done the state some service," not merely by bearing their masters through the field of battle, but by exerting a pugnacious prowess separately and distinctly their own. If he had lived in our time he would not assuredly have grudged a page or two to Moustache.

Moustache was born at Falaise, in Normandy, as nearly as can be ascertained, in or about the month of September, 1799. The family being numerous, he was sent, at the age of six months, to Caen to push his own fortunes, and was received into the house of an eminent grocer, where he was treated in the kindest manner.

But, strolling about the town one day, not long after his arrival, he happened to come upon the parade of a company of grenadiers who had just received the route for Italy. They were brilliantly equipped,—their spirits were high,—and their drums loud. Moustache was fired upon the instant with a portion of their fine enthusiasm. He cut the grocer for ever, slunk quietly out of town, and joined the grenadiers ere they had marched an hour.

He was dirty—he was tolerably ugly—but there was an intelligence, a sparkle, a brightness about his eye that could not be overlooked. "We have not a single dog in the regiment,"

* This story is taken, but not translated, from the *Anecdotes du dix-neuvième siècle*, Paris, 1819.—The ground-work is certainly true. [I can find no reference to the 1819 *Anecdotes*. Possibly Lockhart used the *Anecdotes du xix^e^ siècle et de la fin du xviii^e^, la plupart secrètes et inédites*, publiées par C.-J. Ch. (Charles-Joseph Chambet), Paris, 1824.—B.A.B.]

said the *petit tambour*, "and, at any rate, he looks as if he could forage for himself." The drum-major, having his pipe in his mouth, nodded assent; and Moustache attached himself to the band.

The recruit was soon found to be possessed of considerable tact, and even talent. He already fetched and carried to admiration. Ere three weeks were over he could not only stand with as erect a back as any private in the regiment, but shoulder his musket, act sentinel, and keep time in the march. He was a gay soldier, and of course lived from paw to mouth; but, long ere they reached the Alps, Moustache had contrived to cultivate a particular acquaintance with the messman of his company,—a step which he had no occasion to repent.

He endured the fatigues of Mont St. Bernard with as good grace as any veteran in the army, and they were soon at no great distance from the enemy. Moustache by this time had become quite familiar with the sound not only of drums, but of musketry; and even seemed to be inspired with new ardour as he approached the scene of action.

The first occasion on which he distinguished himself was this:—His regiment being encamped on the heights above Alexandria, a detachment of Austrians, from the vale of Belbo, were ordered to attempt a surprise, and marched against them during the night. The weather was stormy, and the French had no notion any Austrians were so near them. Human suspicion, in short, was asleep, and the camp in danger. But Moustache was on the alert; walking his rounds, as usual, with his nose in the air, he soon detected the greasy Germans. Their knapsacks, full of sourcrout and rancid cheese, betrayed them to his sagacity. He gave the alarm, and these foul feeders turned tail immediately,—a thing Moustache never did.

Next morning it was resolved, *nem. con.*, that Moustache had deserved well of his country. The Greeks would have voted him

a statue; the Romans would have carried him in triumph, like the geese of the Capitol. But Moustache was hailed with a more sensible sort of gratitude. He would not have walked three yards, poor fellow, to see himself cast in plaster; and he liked much better to tread on his own toes than to be carried breast high on the finest hand-barrow that ever came out of the hands of the carpenter. The colonel put his name on the roll—it was published in a regimental order, that he should henceforth receive the ration of a grenadier *per diem*—and Moustache was "*le plus heureux des chiens.*"

He was now cropped *à la militaire*,—a collar, with the name of the regiment, was hung round his neck, and the barber had orders to comb and shave him once a-week.

From this time Moustache was certainly a different animal. In fact, he became so proud, that he could scarcely pass any of his canine brethren without lifting his leg.

In the mean time, a skirmish occurred, in which Moustache had a new opportunity of shewing himself. It was here that he received his first wound,—it, like all the rest, was in front. He received the thrust of a bayonet in his left shoulder, and with difficulty reached the rear. The regimental surgeon dressed the wound which the Austrian steel had inflicted. Moustache suffered himself to be treated *secundum artem*, and remained in the same attitude, during several entire days, in the infirmary.

He was not yet perfectly restored when the great battle of Marengo took place. Lame as he was, he could not keep away from so grand a scene. He marched, always keeping close to the banner, which he had learned to recognise among a hundred; and, like the fifer of the great Gustavus, who whistled all through the battle of Lutzen, Moustache never gave over barking until evening closed upon the combatants of Marengo.

The sight of the bayonets was the only thing that kept him from rushing personally upon the Austrians; but his good for-

tune at last presented him with an occasion to do something. A certain German corporal had a large pointer with him, and this rash animal dared to shew itself in advance of the ranks. To detect him—to jump upon him—and to seize him by the throat—all this was, on the part of Moustache, only a *mouvement à la Française*. The German, being strong and bulky, despised to flinch, and a fierce struggle ensued. A musket-ball interrupted them; the German dog fell dead on the spot; and Moustache, after a moment of bewilderment, put up his paw, and discovered that he had lost an ear. He was puzzled for a little, but soon regained the line of his regiment; and, Victory having soon after shewn herself a faithful goddess, ate his supper among his comrades with an air of satisfaction that spoke plainer than words,—"When posterity talk of Moustache, it will be said, That dog also was at Marengo."

I think it has already been observed, that Moustache owned no particular master, but considered himself as the dog of the whole regiment. In truth, he had almost an equal attachment for every one that wore the French uniform, and a sovereign contempt to boot for every thing in plain clothes. Trades-people and their wives were dirt in his eyes, and whenever he did not think himself strong enough to attack a stranger, he ran away from him.

He had a quarrel with his grenadiers, who, being in garrison, thought fit to chain Moustache to a sentry-box. He could not endure this, and took the first opportunity to escape to a body of chasseurs, who treated him with more respect.

The sun of Austerlitz found him with his chasseurs. In the heat of the action he perceived the ensign who bore the colours of his regiment surrounded by a detachment of the enemy. He flew to his rescue—barked like ten furies—did everything he could to encourage the young officer—but all in vain. The gentleman sunk, covered with a hundred wounds; but not before,

feeling himself about to fall, he had wrapt his body in the folds of the standard. At that moment the cry of victory reached his ear; he echoed it with his last breath, and his generous soul took its flight to the abode of heroes. Three Austrians had already bit the dust under the sword of the ensign, but five or six still remained about him, resolved not to quit it until they had obtained possession of the colours he had so nobly defended. Moustache, meanwhile, had thrown himself on his dead comrade, and was on the point of being pierced with half-a-dozen bayonets when the fortune of war came to his relief. A discharge of grape-shot swept the Austrians into oblivion. Moustache missed a paw, but of that he thought nothing. The moment he perceived that he was delivered from his assailants, he took the staff of the French banner in his teeth, and endeavored all he could to disengage it. But the poor ensign had gripped it so fast in the moment of death, that it was impossible for him to get it out of his hands. The end of it was, that Moustache tore the silk from the cane, and returned to the camp limping, bleeding, and laden with this glorious trophy.

Such an action merited honours; nor were they denied. The old collar was taken from him, and General Lannes ordered a red ribbon to replace it, with a little copper-medal, on which were inscribed these words.—"Il perdit une jambe à la bataille d'Austerlitz, et sauva le drapeau de son régiment." On the reverse:—"Moustache, Chien Français: qu'il soit partout respecté et chéri comme un brave." Meantime it was found necessary to amputate the shattered limb. He bore the operation without a murmur, and limped with the air of a hero.

As it was very easy to know him by his collar and medal, orders were given, that at whatever mess he should happen to present himself, he should be welcomed *en camarade;* and thus he continued to follow the army. Having but three paws and one ear, he could lay small claim to the name of beauty;

nevertheless, he had his little affairs of the heart. Faithful in every thing to the character of a French soldier, Moustache was volatile, and found as many new mistresses as quarters.

At the battle of Essling, he perceived a vidette of his own species; it was a poodle. Moustache rushed to the combat; but O tender surprise! the poodle was a ———. More happy than Tancred, who had not wit enough to recognise his Clorinda, Moustache in a single instant found his martial ardour subside into transports of another description. In a word, he seduced the fair enemy, who deserted with him to the French camp, where she was received with every consideration.

This attachment lasted the best part of a year. Moustache appeared before his comrades in the new capacity of a father; and the Moll Flagons of the regiment took great care of his offspring. Moustache seemed to be happy. His temper was acquiring a softer character. But one day a chasseur, mistaking his dog no doubt, hit him a chance blow with the flat side of his sabre. Moustache, piqued to the heart, deserted, abandoning at once his regiment and his family. He attached himself to some dragoons, and followed them into Spain.

He continued to be infinitely useful in these new campaigns. He was always first up and first dressed. He gave notice the moment any thing struck him as suspicious; he barked at the least noise, except during night-marches, when he received a hint that secrecy was desirable.

At the affair of the Sierra-Morena, Moustache gave a signal proof of his zeal and skill, by bringing home in safety to the camp the horse of a dragoon who had had the misfortune to be killed. How he had managed it no one could tell exactly; but he limped after him into the camp; and the moment he saw him in the hands of a soldier, turned and flew back to the field.

Moustache was killed by a cannon-ball, on the 11th of March, 1811, at the taking of Badajoz. He was buried on the

scene of his last glories, collar, medal, and all. A plain stone served him for a monument; and the inscription was simply,—

"CY GÎT LE BRAVE MOUSTACHE."

The French historian of Moustache adds, but, we hope, without sufficient authority, that the Spaniards afterwards broke the stone, and that the bones of the hero were burnt by order of the Inquisition.

# Leixlip Castle

## *An Irish Family Legend*

*By* the Rev. C. R. MATURIN

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1826

# C. R. Maturin

Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824) *was one of a triumvirate of novelists who constituted what has become known as the Gothic School. Horace Walpole's* The Castle of Otranto (1764) *anticipated their work, but did nothing more than clear the field and plant the seeds. Mrs. Ann Radcliffe produced vigorous shoots in the* 1790*'s with her* Mysteries of Udolpho *and other successful fictions. But Matthew Gregory Lewis gathered the finest flower in* The Monk (1794). *Mary Shelley's* Frankenstein (1818), *it should be remarked, is a bloom from the same bush. Maturin wrote half a dozen novels, all of which have faded from memory but his masterpiece* Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), *a Faust-like story comprising many independent tales. The Gothic novels dealt largely in mystery and terror, relying for their effect on the horror which they invoked and the quaint beliefs in the supernatural upon which they were based. A keen interest in witchcraft and the "renaissance of wonder" is characteristic of the Romantic Movement and reflected in all the arts of the period. "Leixlip Castle" well illustrates this curious vogue.*

# Leixlip Castle

THE INCIDENTS of the following tale are not merely founded on fact, they are facts themselves, which occurred at no very distant period in my own family. The marriage of the parties, their sudden and mysterious separation, and their total alienation from each other until the last period of their mortal existence, are all facts. I cannot vouch for the truth of the supernatural solution given to all these mysteries; but I must still consider the story as a fine specimen of Gothic horrors, and can never forget the impression it made on me when I heard it related for the first time among many other thrilling traditions of the same description.

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The tranquility of the Catholics of Ireland during the disturbed periods of 1715 and 1745, was most commendable, and somewhat extraordinary; to enter into an analysis of their probable motives, is not at all the object of the writer in this tale, as it is pleasanter to state the fact to their honour, than at this distance of time to assign dubious and unsatisfactory reasons for it. Many of them, however, showed a kind of secret disgust at the existing state of affairs, by quitting their family residences, and wandering about like persons who were uncertain of their homes, or possibly expecting better from some near and fortunate contingency.

Among the rest was a Jacobite Baronet, who, sick of his uncongenial situation in a Whig neighbourhood, in the north—where he heard of nothing but the heroic defence of Londonderry; the barbarities of the French generals; and the resistless exhortations of the godly Mr. Walker, a Presbyterian clergy-

man, to whom the citizens gave the title of "Evangelist;"—quitted his paternal residence, and about the year 1720 hired the Castle of Leixlip for three years, (it was then the property of the Conollys, who let it to triennial tenants); and removed thither with his family, which consisted of three daughters—their mother having long been dead.

The Castle of Leixlip, at that period, possessed a character of romantic beauty and feudal grandeur, such as few buildings in Ireland can claim, and which is now, alas, totally effaced by the destruction of its noble woods; on the destroyers of which the writer would wish "a minstrel's malison were said."—Leixlip, though about seven miles only from Dublin, has all the sequestered and picturesque character that imagination could ascribe to a landscape a hundred miles from, not only the metropolis but an inhabited town. After driving a dull mile (an Irish mile) in passing from Lucan to Leixlip, the road, hedged up on one side by the high wall that bounds the demesne of the Veseys, and on the other by low enclosures, over whose rugged tops you have no view at all,—at once opens on Leixlip Bridge, at almost a right angle, and displays a luxury of landscape on which the eye that has seen it even in childhood dwells with delighted recollection.—Leixlip Bridge, a rude but solid structure, projects from a high bank of the Liffey, and slopes rapidly to the opposite side, which there lies remarkably low. To the right the plantations of the Veseys' demesne—no longer obscured by walls—almost mingle their dark woods in its stream, with the opposite ones of Marshfield and St. Catharine's. The river is scarcely visible, overshadowed as it is by the deep, rich and bending foliage of the trees. To the left it bursts out in all the brilliancy of light, washes the garden steps of the houses of Leixlip, wanders round the low walls of the churchyard, plays with the pleasure-boat moored under the arches on which the summer-house of the Castle is raised, and then loses itself among

the rich woods that once skirted those grounds to its very brink. The contrast on the other side, with the luxuriant vegetation, the lighter and more diversified arrangement of terraced walks, scattered shrubberies, temples seated on pinnacles, and thickets that conceal from you the sight of the river until you are on its banks, that mark the character of the grounds which are now the property of Colonel Marly, is peculiarly striking.

Visible above the highest roofs of the town, though a quarter of a mile distant from them, are the ruins of Confy Castle, a right good old predatory tower of the stirring times when blood was shed like water; and as you pass the bridge you catch a glimpse of the waterfall, (or salmon-leap, as it's called,) on whose noon-day lustre, or moon-light beauty, probably the rough livers of that age when Confy Castle was "a tower of strength," never glanced an eye or cast a thought, as they clattered in their harness over Leixlip Bridge, or waded through the stream before that convenience was in existence.

Whether the solitude in which he lived contributed to tranquillize Sir Redmond Blaney's feelings, or whether they had begun to rust from want of collision with those of others, it is impossible to say, but certain it is, that the good Baronet began gradually to lose his tenacity in political matters; and except when a Jacobite friend came to dine with him, and drink with many a significant "nod and beck and smile," the King over the water;—or the parish-priest (good man) spoke of the hopes of better times, and the final success of the right cause, and the old religion;—or a Jacobite servant was heard in the solitude of the large mansion whistling "Charlie is my darling," to which Sir Redmond involuntarily responded in a deep bass voice, somewhat the worse for wear, and marked with more emphasis than good discretion;—except, as I have said, on such occasions, the Baronet's politics, like his life, seemed passing away without notice or effort. Domestic calamities,

too, pressed sorely on the old gentleman: of his three daughters, the youngest, Jane, had disappeared in so extraordinary a manner in her childhood that though it is but a wild, remote family tradition, I cannot help relating it:—

The girl was of uncommon beauty and intelligence, and was suffered to wander about the neighborhood of the castle with the daughter of a servant, who was also called Jane, as a nom de caresse. One evening Jane Blaney and her young companion went far and deep into the woods; their absence created no uneasiness at the time, as these excursions were by no means unusual, till her playfellow returned home alone and weeping, at a very late hour. Her account was, that in passing through a lane at some distance from the castle, an old woman, in the Fingallian dress, (a red petticoat and a long green jacket,) suddenly started out of a thicket, and took Jane Blaney by the arm: she had in her hand two rushes, one of which she threw over her shoulder, and giving the other to the child, motioned to her to do the same. Her young companion, terrified at what she saw, was running away, when Jane Blaney called after her —"Good bye, good bye, it is a long time before you will see me again." The girl said they then disappeared, and she found her way home as she could. An indefatigable search was immediately commenced—woods were traversed, thickets were explored, ponds were drained,—all in vain. The pursuit and the hope were at length given up. Ten years afterwards, the housekeeper of Sir Redmond, having remembered that she left the key of a closet where sweetmeats were kept, on the kitchen-table, returned to fetch it. As she approached the door, she heard a childish voice murmuring—"Cold—cold—cold—how long it is since I have felt a fire!"—She advanced, and saw, to her amazement, Jane Blaney, shrunk to half her usual size, and covered with rags, crouching over the embers of the fire. The housekeeper flew in terror from the spot, and roused the

servants, but the vision had fled. The child was reported to have been seen several times afterwards, as diminutive in form, as though she had not grown an inch since she was ten years of age, and always crouching over a fire, whether in the turret-room or kitchen, complaining of cold and hunger, and apparently covered with rags. Her existence is still said to be protracted under these dismal circumstances, so unlike those of Lucy Gray in Wordsworth's beautiful ballad:

> Yet some will say, that to this day
> She is a living child—
> That they have met sweet Lucy Gray
> Upon the lonely wild;
> O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
> And never looks behind;
> And hums a solitary song
> That whistles in the wind.

The fate of the eldest daughter was more melancholy, though less extraordinary; she was addressed by a gentleman of competent fortune and unexceptionable character: he was a Catholic, moreover; and Sir Redmond Blaney signed the marriage articles, in full satisfaction of the security of his daughter's soul, as well as of her jointure. The marriage was celebrated at the Castle of Leixlip; and, after the bride and bridegroom had retired, the guests still remained drinking to their future happiness, when suddenly, to the great alarm of Sir Redmond and his friends, loud and piercing cries were heard to issue from the part of the castle in which the bridal chamber was situated.

Some of the more courageous hurried up the stairs; it was too late—the wretched bridegroom had burst, on that fatal night, into a sudden and most horrible paroxysm of insanity. The mangled form of the unfortunate and expiring lady bore attestation to the mortal virulence with which the disease had operated on the wretched husband, who died a victim to it himself after the involuntary murder of his bride. The bodies

were interred, as soon as decency would permit, and the story hushed up.

Sir Redmond's hopes of Jane's recovery were diminishing every day, though he still continued to listen to every wild tale told by the domestics; and all his care was supposed to be now directed towards his only surviving daughter. Anne living in solitude, and partaking only of the very limited education of Irish females of that period, was left very much to the servants, among whom she increased her taste for superstitious and supernatural horrors, to a degree that had a most disastrous effect on her future life.

Among the numerous menials of the Castle, there was one "withered crone," who had been nurse to the late Lady Blaney's mother, and whose memory was a complete Thesaurus terrorum. The mysterious fate of Jane first encouraged her sister to listen to the wild tales of this hag, who avouched, that at one time she saw the fugitive standing before the portrait of the late mother in one of the apartments of the Castle, and muttering to herself—"Woe's me, woe's me! how little my mother thought her wee Jane would ever come to be what she is!" But as Anne grew older she began more "seriously to incline" to the hag's promises that she could show her her future bridegroom, on the performance of certain ceremonies, which she at first revolted from as horrible and impious; but, finally, at the repeated instigation of the old woman, consented to act a part in. The period fixed upon for the performance of these unhallowed rites, was now approaching;—it was near the 31st of October,—the eventful night, when such ceremonies were, and still are supposed, in the North of Ireland, to be most potent in their effects. All day long the Crone took care to lower the mind of the young lady to the proper key of submissive and trembling credulity, by every horrible story she could relate; and she told them with frightful and supernatural energy. This

woman was called Collogue by the family, a name equivalent to Gossip in England, or Cummer in Scotland, (though her real name was Bridget Dease;) and she verified the name, by the exercise of an unwearied loquacity, an indefatigable memory, and a rage for communicating and inflicting terror, that spared no victim in the household, from the groom, whom she sent shivering to his rug, to the Lady of the Castle, over whom she felt she held unbounded sway.

The 31st of October arrived,—the Castle was perfectly quiet before eleven o'clock; half an hour afterwards, the Collogue and Anne Blaney were seen gliding along a passage that led to what is called King John's Tower, where it is said that monarch received the homage of the Irish princes as Lord of Ireland, and which, at all events, is the most ancient part of the structure. The Collogue opened a small door with a key which she had secreted about her, and urged the young lady to hurry on. Anne advanced to the postern, and stood there irresolute and trembling like a timid swimmer on the bank of an unknown stream. It was a dark autumnal evening; a heavy wind sighed among the woods of the Castle, and bowed the branches of the lower trees almost to the waves of the Liffey, which, swelled by recent rains, struggled and roared amid the stones that obstructed the channel. The steep descent from the Castle lay before her, with its dark avenue of elms; a few lights still burned in the little village of Leixlip—but from the lateness of the hour it was probable they would soon be extinguished.The lady lingered—"And must I go alone?" said she, foreseeing the terrors of her fearful journey could be aggravated by her more fearful purpose."Ye must, or all will be spoiled," said the hag, shading the miserable light, that did not extend its influence above six inches on the path of the victim. "Ye must go alone—and I will watch for you here, dear, till you come back, and then see what will come to you at twelve o'clock."

The unfortunate girl paused. "Oh! Collogue, Collogue, if you would but come with me. Oh! Collogue, come with me, if it be but to the bottom of the castle-hill."

"If I went with you, dear, we should never reach the top of it alive again, for there are them near that would tear us both to pieces."

"Oh! Collogue, Collogue—let me turn back then, and go to my own room—I have advanced too far, and I have done too much."

"And that's what you have, dear, and so you must go further, and do more still, unless, when you return to your own room, you would see the likeness of *someone* instead of a handsome young bridegroom."

The young lady looked about her for a moment, terror and wild hope trembling in her heart;—then, with a sudden impulse of supernatural courage, she darted like a bird from the terrace of the Castle, the fluttering of her white garments was seen for a few moments, and then the hag, who had been shading the flickering light with her hand, bolted the postern, and, placing the candle before a glazed loophole, sat down on a stone seat in the recess of the tower, to watch the event of the spell. It was an hour before the young lady returned; when her face was as pale, and her eyes as fixed, as those of a dead body, but she held in her grasp a dripping garment, a proof that her errand had been performed. She flung it into her companion's hands, and then stood panting and gazing wildly about her, as if she knew not where she was. The hag herself grew terrified at the insane and breathless state of her victim, and hurried her to her chamber; but here the preparations for the terrible ceremonies of the night were the first objects that struck her, and, shivering at the sight, she covered her eyes with her hands, and stood immoveably fixed in the middle of the room.

It needed all the hag's persuasions (aided even by mysterious

menaces), combined with the returning faculties and reviving curiosity of the poor girl, to prevail on her to go through the remaining business of the night. At length she said, as if in desperation, "I will go through with it: but be in the next room; and if what I dread should happen, I will ring my father's little silver bell which I have secured for the night,—and as you have a soul to be saved, Collogue, come to me at its very first sound."

The hag promised, gave her last instructions with eager and jealous minuteness, and then retired to her own room, which was adjacent to that of the young lady. Her candle had burned out, but she stirred up the embers of her turf fire, and sat nodding over them, and smoothing her pallet from time to time, but resolved not to lie down while there was a chance of a sound from the lady's room, for which she herself, withered as her feelings were, waited with a mingled feeling of anxiety and terror.

It was now long past midnight, and all was silent as the grave throughout the Castle. The hag dozed over the embers till her head touched her knees, then started up as the sound of the bell seemed to tinkle in her ears, then dozed again, and again started as the bell appeared to tinkle more distinctly;—suddenly she was roused, not by the bell, but by the most piercing and horrible cries from the neighbouring chamber. The Crone, aghast for the first time, at the possible consequences of the mischief she might have occasioned, hastened to the room. Anne was in convulsions, and the hag was compelled reluctantly to call up the housekeeper (removing meanwhile the implements of the ceremony), and assist in applying all the specifics known at that day, burnt feathers, etc., to restore her. When they had at length succeeded, the housekeeper was dismissed, the door was bolted, and the Collogue was left alone with Anne; the subject of their conference might have been

guessed at, but was not known until many years afterwards; but Anne that night held in her hand, in the shape of a weapon with the use of which neither of them was acquainted, an evidence that her chamber had been visited by a being of no earthly form.

This evidence the hag importuned her to destroy, or to remove, but she persisted with fatal tenacity in keeping it. She locked it up, however, immediately, and seemed to think she had acquired a right, since she had grappled so fearfully with the mysteries of futurity, to know all the secrets of which that weapon might yet lead to the disclosure. But from that night it was observed that her character, her manner, and even her countenance, became altered. She grew stern and solitary, shrunk at the sight of her former associates, and imperatively forbade the slightest allusion to the circumstances which had occasioned this mysterious change.

It was a few days subsequent to this event that Anne, who after dinner had left the Chaplain reading the life of St. Francis Xavier to Sir Redmond, and retired to her own room to work, and, perhaps, to muse, was surprised to hear the outer gate ring loudly and repeatedly—a sound she had never heard since her first residence in the Castle; for the few guests who resorted there came and departed as noiselessly as humble visitors at the house of a great man generally do. Straightway there rode up the avenue of elms, which we have already mentioned, a stately gentleman, followed by four servants, all mounted, the two former having pistols in their holsters, and the two latter carrying saddle-bags before them: though it was the first week in November, the dinner hour being one o'clock, Anne had light enough to notice all these circumstances. The arrival of the stranger seemed to cause much, though not unwelcome tumult in the Castle; orders were loudly and hastily given for the accommodation of the servants and horses;—steps were

heard traversing the numerous passages for a full hour—then all was still; and it was said that Sir Redmond had locked with his own hand the door of the room where he and the stranger sat, and desired that no one should dare to approach it. About two hours afterwards, a female servant came with orders from her master, to have a plentiful supper ready by eight o'clock, at which he desired the presence of his daughter. The family establishment was on a handsome scale for an Irish house, and Anne had only to descend to the kitchen to order the roasted chickens to be well strewed with brown sugar according to the unrefined fashion of the day, to inspect the mixing of the bowl of sago with its allowance of a bottle of port wine and a large handful of the richest spices, and to order particularly that the pease pudding should have a huge lump of cold salt butter stuck in its centre; and then, her household cares being over, to retire to her room and array herself in a robe of white damask for the occasion. At eight o'clock she was summoned to the supper-room. She came in, according to the fashion of the times, with the first dish; but as she passed through the anteroom, where the servants were holding lights and bearing the dishes, her sleeve was twitched, and the ghastly face of the Collogue pushed close to hers; while she muttered "Did not I say he would come for you, dear?" Anne's blood ran cold, but she advanced, saluted her father and the stranger with two low and distinct reverences, and then took her place at the table. Her feelings of awe and perhaps terror at the whisper of her associate, were not diminished by the appearance of the stranger; there was a singular and mute solemnity in his manner during the meal. He ate nothing. Sir Redmond appeared constrained, gloomy and thoughtful. At length, starting, he said (without naming the stranger's name,) "You will drink my daughter's health?" The stranger intimated his willingness to have that honour, but absently filled his glass with

water; Anne put a few drops of wine into hers, and bowed towards him. At that moment, for the first time since they had met, she beheld his face—it was pale as that of a corpse. The deadly whitenes of his cheeks and lips, the hollow and distant sound of his voice, and the strange lustre of his large dark moveless eyes, strongly fixed on her, made her pause and even tremble as she raised the glass to her lips; she set it down, and then with another silent reverence retired to her chamber.

There she found Bridget Dease, busy in collecting the turf that burned on the hearth, for there was no grate in the apartment. "Why are you here?" she said, impatiently.

The hag turned on her, with a ghastly grin of congratulation, "Did not I tell you that he would come for you?"

"I believe he has," said the unfortunate girl, sinking into the huge wicker chair by her bedside; "for never did I see mortal with such a look."

"But is not he a fine stately gentleman?" pursued the hag.

"He looks as if he were not of this world," said Anne.

"Of this world, or of the next," said the hag, raising her bony fore-finger, "mark my words—so sure as the—(here she repeated some of the horrible formularies of the 31st of October)—so sure he will be your bridegroom."

"Then I shall be the bride of a corse," said Anne; "for he I saw to-night is no living man."

A fortnight elapsed, and whether Anne became reconciled to the features she had thought so ghastly, by the discovery that they were the handsomest she had ever beheld—and that the voice, whose sound at first was so strange and unearthly, was subdued into a tone of plaintive softness when addressing her; —or whether it is impossible for two young persons with unoccupied hearts to meet in the country, and meet often, to gaze silently on the same stream, wander under the same trees, and listen together to the wind that waves the branches, without

experiencing an assimilation of taste;—or whether it was from all these causes combined, but in less than a month Anne heard the declaration of the stranger's passion with many a blush, though without a sigh. He now avowed his name and rank. He stated himself to be a Scottish Baronet, of the name of Sir Richard Maxwell; family misfortunes had driven him from his country, and for ever precluded the possibility of his return: he had transferred his property to Ireland, and purposed to fix his residence there for life. Such was his statement. The courtship of those days was brief and simple. Anne became the wife of Sir Richard, and, I believe, they resided with her father till his death, when they removed to their estate in the North. There they remained for several years, in tranquillity and happiness, and had a numerous family. Sir Richard's conduct was marked by but two peculiarities: he not only shunned the intercourse, but the sight of any of his countrymen, and, if he happened to hear that a Scotsman had arrived in the neighbouring town, he shut himself up till assured of the stranger's departure. The other was his custom of retiring to his own chamber, and remaining invisible to his family on the anniversary of the 30th of October. The lady, who had her own associations connected with that period, only questioned him once on the subject of this seclusion, and was then solemnly and even sternly enjoined never to repeat the inquiry. Matters stood thus, somewhat mysteriously, but not unhappily, when on a sudden, without any cause assigned or assignable, Sir Richard and Lady Maxwell parted, and never more met in this world, nor was she ever permitted to see one of her children to her dying hour. He continued to live at the family mansion, and she fixed her residence with a distant relative in a remote part of the country. So total was the disunion, that the name of either was never heard to pass the other's lips, from the moment of separation until that of dissolution.

Lady Maxwell survived Sir Richard forty years, living to the great age of 96; and, according to a promise, previously given, disclosed to a descendant with whom she had lived, the following extraordinary circumstances.

She said that on the night of the 30th of October, about seventy-five years before, at the instigation of her ill-advising attendant, she had washed one of her garments in a place where four streams met, and performed other unhallowed ceremonies under the direction of the Collogue, in the expectation that her future husband would appear to her in her chamber at twelve that night. The critical moment arrived, but with it no lover-like form. A vision of indescribable horror approached her bed, and flinging at her an iron weapon of a shape and construction unknown to her, bade her "recognize her future husband by *that*." The terrors of this visit soon deprived her of her senses; but on her recovery, she persisted, as has been said, in keeping the fearful pledge of the reality of the vision, which, on examination, appeared to be incrusted with blood. It remained concealed in the inmost drawer of her cabinet till the morning of her separation. On that morning, Sir Richard Maxwell rose before day-light to join a hunting party,—he wanted a knife for some accidental purpose, and, missing his own, called to Lady Maxwell, who was still in bed, to lend him one. The lady, who was half asleep, answered that in such a drawer of her cabinet he would find one. He went, however, to another, and the next moment she was fully awakened by seeing her husband present the terrible weapon to her throat, and threaten her with instant death unless she disclosed how she came by it. She supplicated for life, and then, in an agony of horror and contrition, told the tale of that eventful night. He gazed at her for a moment with a countenance which rage, hatred, and despair converted, as she avowed, into a living likeness of the demon-visage she had once beheld (so singularly was the

fated resemblance fulfilled), and then exclaimed, "You won me by the devil's aid, but you shall not keep me long," left her —to meet no more in this world. Her husband's secret was not unknown to the lady, though the means by which she became possessed of it were wholly unwarrantable. Her curiosity had been strongly excited by her husband's aversion to his countrymen, and it was so stimulated by the arrival of a Scottish gentleman in the neighborhood some time before, who professed himself formerly acquainted with Sir Richard, and spoke mysteriously of the causes that drove him from his country— that she contrived to procure an interview with him under a feigned name, and obtained from him the knowledge of circumstances which embittered her after-life to its latest hour. His story was this:—

Sir Richard Maxwell was at deadly feud with a younger brother; a family feast was proposed to reconcile them, and as the use of knives and forks was then unknown in the Highlands, the company met armed with their dirks for the purpose of carving. They drank deeply; the feast, instead of harmonizing, began to inflame their spirits; the topics of old strife were renewed; hands, that at first touched their weapons in defiance, drew them in fury at last, and, in the fray, Sir Richard mortally wounded his brother. His life was with difficulty saved from the vengeance of the clan, and he was hurried towards the sea-coast, near which the house stood, and concealed there till a vessel could be procured to convey him to Ireland. He embarked on the night of the 30th of October, and while he was traversing the deck in unutterable agony of spirit, his hand accidentally touched the dirk which he had unconsciously worn ever since the fatal night. He drew it, and praying "that the guilt of his brother's blood might be as far from his soul, as he could fling that weapon from his body,"—sent it with all his strength into the air. This instrument he found secreted in the

lady's cabinet, and whether he really believed her to have become possessed of it by supernatural means, or whether he feared his wife was a secret witness of his crime, has not been ascertained, but the result was what I have stated.

The separation took place on the discovery: for the rest,

> I know not how the truth may be,
> I tell the Tale as 'twas told to me.

# The Fortress of Saguntum

*By* W. H. AINSWORTH

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1826

# W. H. Ainsworth

William Harrison Ainsworth (1805-1882), *a prolific literary professional, was one of the more important followers of Sir Walter Scott. He wrote some thirty-nine novels, chiefly historical, with a gusto and incisiveness which make them still readable. But in the delineation of character he was weak; consequently, his fame was ephemeral. Ainsworth was also an enterprising journalist, editing among other publications his own magazine,* Ainsworth's, *and subsequently* The New Monthly. *Sensitive to the winds of public approbation, he trimmed his sails to obtain maximum profit from the prevailing currents. "The Fortress of Saguntum," if it be not admirable intrinsically, is at least an admirable example of Ainsworth's fictional subject-matter, an odd combination of the historical or pseudo-historical and the Gothic. We have here the virtues of the Scott-like story neatly counterbalanced by the insipid characterization.*

# The Fortress of Saguntum

JOURNEYING, many years ago, through the Eastern provinces of Spain, I lingered in Valencia to survey the ruins at Murviedro, the ancient Saguntum. Early one bright morning, I ascended the mountainous range, on the summit of which the remains of the ancient town are situated, and which, stretching out to the waves of the Mediterranean, separates the valleys of Valencia and Almenara.

I gazed with enthusiastic admiration on the beauties by which I was surrounded,—on the perfect picture whose loveliness met my view on every side. Wide to the east expanded the dark waters of the sea, foaming and glistening in the beams of the rising day-God; north and south the valleys glowed in the same life-giving splendour. The newly risen spring was gushing forth in very wantonness; and the fertile olives and the golden foliage of the mulberry trees, clothed the sides of the hills and the beautiful plain of Valencia; beyond which, with its light steeples and sun-gilt spires, lay the city itself gleaming in the all-pervading radiance. Herbage, abundant and luxuriant, rioted in fulness; wild flowers sprang up at every step; and the breezes redolent with perfumes, and freshened by the waves over which they were wafted, bore with them a coolness more than delicious; nothing was wanting to the perfect unity of liveliness—the rich natural enchantment of the scene. The songs of innumerable birds saluted the ear, and as the muleteer followed his quadruped companions along the paths that wound around the hills, their jingling bells rang with many a merry peal.

And then with what seeds of reflection, what food for fancy

did the spot on which I stood furnish me. The remains of empires, each powerful and splendid in its day of triumph, but now alike faded and vanished, lay crumbling around me. The ancient Fortress mingled in its remains the architecture of nations and times far distant and unlike. The walls that long withstood the power and skill of the Carthaginian, were varied with the barbaric masonry of the Saracen. The strange inscriptions, the horse-shoe arches, and fantastic ornature of the East, were employed to deck the unadorned strength of its former defences. The works of two dynasties had faded away, leaving in their decay one common monument to the might of Time, their common destroyer.

The glorious recollections of chivalry too, haunted, and hovered over the spot. The wild dreams of poetry—of knights and ladies—rich banquets and gorgeous festivals—the joust and the tournament; schools of romantic honour which lent a polish to the stern and warlike character of the age,—the submission of power to beauty, and strength to weakness;—these, and similar reflections, thronged upon my mind, until fancy almost upreared the perished halls and shattered towers, and peopled the scene with plumed dames and crested warriors, with enthusiastic minstrels and liveried retainers,—all the enchanting pomp and circumstance with which we love to array times and localities, whose distance softens their harsher lineaments, as the veil that hides the features of loveliness, whilst it weakens our perception of their imperfections, enhances in imagination the influence of their charms.

"Alas!" the dreamer would say, in his moments of creative musing, "that these things should be no more! That the noble thoughts and lofty aspirations of the children of chivalry should be lost in the cold policy of statesmen and the mechanic organization of modern warfare. Their love and deep loyalty, courage, and fond devotion; a watchfulness of honour, that

knew no stain and brooked no insult,—that hung a living halo, an impelling spirit around the hearts and feelings of men. Then love was purchased with long service, and service was no burthen when love lightened its chains:—devoted to two ends only, the candidate for love and fame pursued his way, regardless of consequences, either to win by success, the reward of his endeavours, or to perish in the pursuit, attended to the grave by the tears of beauty and the approval of valour."

I determined not to leave this part of the country without paying some further visits to a spot which had laid so forcible a hold upon my feelings. Accordingly I went once, and again. I traced ruins, examined inscriptions, studied arches, and busied myself as much and to as little purpose as a zealous antiquarian who had just added to his name the importance of F. A. S. would have done.

In my researches, I met with an old man who was a more curious, I had almost said, a more antique relic than any I had encountered at Saguntum. Besides his extraordinary physiognomy, the keenness and tenuity of which seemed to me fraught with much meditation, he appeared the most positive and captious old gentleman I had ever met with. In the course of his investigations he had formed divers theories, some of them, it must be admitted, almost as plausible as many which the kindness and generosity of my own countrymen have, at various times, benevolently patronized. Jerome Casos, for so my ancient friend was entitled, lamented exceedingly his not having lived at the time of the Saracens—from his appearance one would have sworn he had—in order that he might have done the state some service by putting in practice a recipe of his own for conversion of the unbelievers to Christianity.

What, however, constituted the principal attraction which induced me to seek an acquaintance with this eccentric person, was the fund of traditionary stories he had accumulated rela-

tive to the Fortress and its former possessors. To all other relations, historical or topographical, he turned a deaf ear; they were to him foolishness; but when I indulged in any conjecture or observation at all connected with this, his local hobby-horse, his instantaneous attention, the gleaming of his little eyes, and the pricking up of his chin and nose, expressed the interest he took in the subject. One of these stories, in some measure pruned of the redundancies with which he had encumbered it, I have translated from my journal for the amusement of the reader:

*A Tradition of the*

## FORTRESS OF SAGUNTUM

And many a lady there was set,
In purple and in pall;
But fair Christabelle, so woe-begone,
Was the fairest of them all.

Then many a knight was mickle of might
Before his lady gay;
But a stranger wight, whom no man knew,
He won the prize that day.

His action, it was all of black,
His hawberk and his shield:
No, no man wist whence he did come:
No, no man knew where he had gone,
When he came off the field.

SIR EAULINE.

During the early contentions between the native Spaniards and their Moorish invaders, (the exact period my informant's chronology was inadequate to supply) the fortress of Saguntum was in the possession of a Spanish Grandee, the representative of an ancient and distinguished family. The patrimony which had descended to him, unwasted by the excesses of the succeeding owners, had rather increased than otherwise, and

Sebastian de Alzavar found himself consequently, on the death of his father, a man of considerable opulence and importance; that is to say, he was owner of the castle of Saguntum, with its domains, and of divers quantities of armour, offensive and defensive, the use of which to define, would infallibly turn the brains of a society of antiquaries of the present day. His sway extended over a tolerable range of territory, the cultivation of a small part of which supplied the Hidalgo and his retainers with the means of pasture for their cattle, and some few vegetable productions; and the much larger portion which constituted the remainder of his petty kingdom, (for, in those days, every noble in his own domain was a monarch) lay waste and barren, except where a few wild olives and straggling shrubs benevolently sprang up of their own accord to enliven the scene. A host of raggamuffins, who protected themselves from the weather by steel caps and quilted doublets, strong enough to withstand a smart stroke from a sword, occupied one spacious department of the buildings, and, on condition of killing and being killed whenever their lord thought proper to demand their services, and of amusing themselves in the interim with duck stones and other rational recreations, were allowed to eat, drink, and sleep, at the expense of him under whose banner they had enlisted themselves.

But the treasure upon which Sebastian chiefly prided himself, and which had, at all times, attracted much attention to his habitation from wandering knights, good swords and men of worship all, was a daughter whose fame extended beyond the limits of the province, and whose accomplishments were as great as her beauty,—a theme lauded by bards and celebrated by roving minstrels. Besides working tapestry equal to that of Flanders,—being expert at all the domestic exercises in which women were then accustomed to occupy themselves,—expert, I say, beyond any female on record,—it was positively

affirmed by those rhodomontading vagabonds the poets, that she was able not merely to spell, but actually to read; whilst some of the boldest of her panegyrists added the useful though difficult and mysterious art of writing, to the list of the lady's acquirements. Then her skill on the guitar was exquisite, and she sang the romantic ballads which once formed the national poetry of Spain (a poetry worthy of a proud nation), with a spirit and feeling sufficient to inspire with heroism a hundred coats of mail. In accomplishments, therefore, Donna Estafina was without a peer.

But brilliant as might justly be the expectations of one possessed of such unheard-of perfections, there were traits in the lady's character, more touching, though less splendid than those which were sung of in halls at banquets. It was true her admirers praised her beauty; but whilst they lauded the brightness and blackness of her eyes, with all the hyperboles which poets claim to use, the mild expression in which virtue and benevolence beamed from them was little spoken of; and the liveliness of her form was praised and worshipped, when the pure spirit which it served to enshrine was unheeded and unvalued.

I by no means intend to assert, that the lady though blessed with all these excellent qualities was wholly exempt from the failings of her sex: Good and gentle as she was, she was descended from the same original stock as the rest of her species, and, like them retaining a spice of the perverseness of our first mother, was apt to be obstinate when requested to do any thing which warred with her own notions of propriety. Under the influence of this disposition she had refused to take her place in the common hall, when a neighbouring Grandee of great power, wealth and ancestry, dined at her father's table; and this merely because he was reputed to be addicted to drunkenness and passionate in his cups, as an instance of which

it was alleged that he had killed his first wife by his violence, at a time when women claim more than common kindness from those with whom they are associated.

It happened by the chance of war, that, in an excursion against the Saracens, Alzavar was taken prisoner. In the hope of gaining his freedom, he offered for his ransom enormous sums to the leader who had made him captive. Unfortunately the Saracen being among his own people a man of rank and affluence, was not to be tempted by the Hidalgo's proposals, and they were consequently rejected; not that he was maintained on jail allowance, far from it. On the contrary, he was provided for with due consideration to his station and character; for there was a spirit of wild and romantic generosity in those wars, which prevented men from oppressing or treating with indignity those whom fortune had placed within their power.

But whilst Mirza Abu'l Anwar resisted without effort the temptation of treasure, he was less invulnerable to that of beauty; and the report of the charms of La Bella Estafina, had reached his ear with all the garnishings of fame. In the spirit of the times, he immediately fell in love with this lady although he had never seen her, and at once determined to make the daughter's hand the condition of the liberation of the father; imagining that he should thus without difficulty obtain her for his bride. The difference of religion he considered as a trifling obstacle, for he was determined to convert his intended to the truths of Moslemism; and as to a thousand other difficulties which presented themselves, they only added fuel to the fire, and lent fresh allurements to the enterprise in which he was determined to engage.

With these thoughts and these resolutions, Mirza betook himself to the apartments of his captive. But here he soon found that he had reckoned without his host; the proud Span-

iard refused indignantly his consent to the compact, and the Moslem retired in a fit of disappointment and offended haughtiness.

But in process of time, and as his captivity by being prolonged grew more irksome, Alzavar began to think that there might be no very great harm in coming to some terms with the infidel. He proposed therefore to give him his daughter on the condition of his own immediate liberation, and on the further stipulation that he should vanquish, in single combat, any three Spanish warriors who should successively present themselves to the trial. Spurred on by his passion, and not doubting but that he could overcome the choicest of the knights of Spain, the Saracen consented to his captive's proposal, and fixed that day month for the fulfilment of the contract. Other arrangements were then entered into for the regulation of the combat, and their mutual words having been pledged for the performance of the stipulations, the only security required, the Spaniard was conducted to the boundary of his own territory and dismissed in safety.

The dismay of Estafina when informed of the peril in which she stood was overwhelming. She had not known love, and thus in her breast the Saracen had no rival; but she was imbued with a strong attachment to her religion, and internally vowed that if she must indeed be yielded to her purchaser, it should not be as a living bride. With no one of her own sex and rank in whom she could confide or with whom she might converse, she had been compelled to seek companionship in her own internal resources, and had resorted to her religion, the only study in which her situation allowed her to engage, with a warmth and ardour of devotion which burned, uninterrupted by meaner considerations, purely and steadily in her breast.

The report was soon spread that the beautiful Estafina was to be the price of her father's liberty, unless ransomed by the

disinterested valour of some knightly champion of beauty. But though her father had not doubted, from the celebrity of his daughter's charms, that a warrior would speedily be found able and willing to encounter with success the lance of Mirza Abu'l Anwar, yet he had reckoned too precipitately and without due regard to circumstances; for, surrounded as his domains were on almost every side by the enemy; occupied as were the Spanish chivalry, and every individual engaged in a warfare of more than common interest to bosoms in which a spark existed of that flame which binds us to our country and our home; and formidable as was the well tried skill and prowess of the Saracen, the intelligence of the proposed combat neither extended so widely, nor was followed by so ready a disposition to engage in it, as Alzavar had looked for. Two knights only had appeared, and the moon was fast waning whose decline was to bring the challenger to the plain of Valencia.

Time galloped withal, yet no succour came; nothing from which even misery could extract the shadow of a consolation; and (for hope delayed maketh the heart sick) the fortitude of the victim sank as the time approached which was to give her up to the arms of an infidel, or leave her the dreadful alternative of closing by self-violence her own existence; a course which she had persuaded herself would, under the circumstances be, if not laudable, at least justifiable. Suns rose and set, and the hours hurried onwards, until the day arrived whose morrow was to determine her fate. Determined, indeed, it already seemed; for it was evident that the two champions who had offered themselves would prove no match for the renowned leader of the Saracens. The day declined, and no other knight had appeared to engage in the next morning's trial.

It was a deep, rich autumnal evening—the winds moaned softly, and the branches quivered in their passing embraces. The small light wave, that curled up its foaming crest to meet

the kiss of the breeze, indented the sand with its uniform ripple, whose monotonous beat fell on the ear with a languid and measured iteration of sound. The few birds that yet lingered from their rest, poured forth sad and melancholy strains; the sun blazed over the broad bosom of the tideless Mediterranean, expanded to receive his sinking splendour; and directly opposite, his yellow rival began to throw her watery beams over the dusky mountains. One or two stars dimly twinkled; a dewy mist rose from the herbage, and hung like a mantle over the earth. The sun sank deeper into the waves; the moon rose brighter and higher above the horizon, whilst the blue sky deepened in beauty with the commingling hues of splendour that were interwoven in its glorious canopy.

At this hour of deep and solemn stillness sat the unhappy Estafina, in a tapestried chamber of Saguntum, her mind's tumult a decided contrast to the peace which pervaded the scene before her. The stirring superstitions of the Roman faith, aided as their influence was by the solitary situation, and too great mental susceptibility of the daughter of Alzavar, and cherished and kept alive within her by the legends of saints and the raptures, real or feigned, of the writers whose works alone she studied, had raised, to a state of feverish and irritable excitement, a mind already enfeebled by anxiety, and tormented by the anticipation of her destiny; until she determined, at length, rather to devote herself to martyrdom than become the victim of the enemy of her faith and her country. To those who know the power of religious fanaticism in straining the mind to an undue and supernatural tension, this will not appear strange, and still less so that it was followed by its constant attendant, a more than proportionable degree of depression and relaxation. Extremes generate each other; and the paroxysm of enthusiasm past, its place in the soul is often usurped by a deep and settled despair. In an agonized state of mind she seated

herself in the recess of a window, whose tressilled stonework and stained panes admitted scantily the red and doubtful light reflected from the yet glowing clouds.

The apartment was one of sombre magnificence. The painted roof was intersected with richly carved groins of cypress, black with antiquity, springing from a cornice of the same material, and adorned with the grotesque representations of a thousand monsters. The walls were covered with tapestry from the looms of Flanders, on which were delineated the wild legends of an age yet more rude and more romantic. But the most remarkable of the ornaments of the chamber, was a picture placed at the end of the room, near where Estafina sat, presenting a full-length portrait of an ancestor of her family—a warrior clad in complete armour. On his shield, and on the mantle in which he was partly enveloped, the red cross denoted him as one of the champions of the faith: a golden chain hung around his neck, and his helmet was decorated with a lofty and sable plume. His countenance, to the extent of the painter's skill, was marked with the lineaments of sternness approaching to ferocity. A black steed stood beside him, decked in the now obsolete trappings of ancient warfare.

Upon this specimen of art Estafina gazed with half unconscious awe. The warrior whom it represented had been handed down to his posterity as famous for his destroying might among the infidels. In a fierce encounter he once bestrode the body of a wounded comrade, and brought him away amid the adverse clashing of a hundred blades, having with his own hand killed five of the enemy. Her familiarity with this tradition caused the wretched maid to gaze with anxious feelings upon the portrait. Had she such an arm (she thought) to smite the Moslem in her behalf, she might be safe; but the warrior had gone to his home long years ago, and there was no one like him at hand to succour her. The sun's last glow had now faded, and the moon

and stars held undisputed dominion over the night, yet no help was nigh, and hope had long since expired. It was then that almost distracted with boundless and irrepressible grief, and deserted by all expectation of human aid, she called on the holy ones of heaven to assist her; it was then that in the weakness and agony of her broken spirit, she cast herself before the picture, and wildly implored her ancestor to deliver her from the perdition that threatened her; and then it was—doubt it who may—that the warrior bowed his head, and his features melted into a look of promise and protection; the air, fanned by his waving plume, wafted over her cheek as she sank to the ground in a state of insensibility, overcome by the mingled hope and terror that throbbed with resistless violence in her breast.

It was long ere she recovered; and when, at last, reviving nature awoke her from the trance into which she had fallen, she found herself in almost total darkness. The moon was no longer abroad casting her rich flood of light around her; the stars were shrouded in thick, dull vapours, and it was with difficulty she explored the way to her sleeping apartment, where she found her attendants wondering at her prolonged absence, and on the point of setting forth in search of her.

She threw herself on the bed, but her slumbers were restless and perturbed. Dismal dreams arose in succession with all their hideous concomitants of confused and indefinite shapes—dim, loathsome, and terrible. Exhausted more than refreshed, she awoke in the morning to exchange the fears and fever of the imagination, for the yet more dreadful realities which seemed to await her. The attendant maidens busily engaged themselves in the duties of ministering at her toilet—services which she submitted to with sickly and unresisting apathy.

Meanwhile the hammers of the distant workmen, who were laboriously engaged in staking out the place of combat on the

level plain of Valencia, fell upon her ear, mingled with the clashing of armour and the clanging tools of the armourers. Every stroke went to her heart, and seemed to ring a death-knell to her peace. At last they died away; but were almost immediately succeeded by a new and, to her, more dreadful note.

It was a faint far-away measure of barbaric music—the wild romantic melody of the East, that, floating on the air, and vibrating in a prolonged and fantastic strain, jarred with horrible discord on her ear. Her maidens gazed on her, and on each other, with looks that required not the aid of language to convey their meaning; and despair beamed in every eye as it was strained in the direction from whence the music appeared to proceed, to catch the first glimpse of the feared and hated Saracen.

One by one, their armour gleaming in the splendour of the morning, the Saracen and his retinue bounded down the steeps that border the plain of Valencia. Spurring their fiery steeds, that needed no such appliances to impel them along, they speedily arrived at the lists. A solemn courtesy was exchanged between the chieftains. Mirza passed to the place assigned for him on the field, and cast down, as he rode along, his glittering gauntlet in token of challenge to his opponents.

Had Estafina been less deeply interested in the scene before her, as she gazed from the lattice of her apartment upon the preparations for the combat, she could not have beheld without pleasure, scarcely without admiration, the noble appearance and bearing of the Saracen. He was clad in a superb suit of scale armour richly embossed, which, fitting close to his person, displayed the symmetry of his well-knit athletic frame; the plume, with which his casque was adorned, adding in appearance to the advantages of a form uncommonly tall and well proportioned. The fleet Arabian on which he rode, was caparisoned in a manner worthy of his rider and himself. It was a beautiful chesnut, and in its mould were admirably blended

the requisites of strength and fleetness. His flowing mane sported wildly around the serpent sweep of his proudly arched neck, while bounding on his elastic haunches, he seemed with his sonorous neigh to sound a haughty triumph over the inferior, though beautiful and valuable, steeds of the two knights; and it was difficult which to admire most, the beauty of the animal or the skill with which his rider governed his every motion.

Meanwhile one of the champions of Estafina slowly advancing, raised on the point of his spear the gage of the Saracen, and in a moment the combatants were at their stations urging and checking their fiery steeds, and waiting but for the signal to try on each other the strength and skill of lance and arm.

It was a moment of fearful and intensely agonizing suspense to the devoted daughter, who in her tower, incapable of speech, sank on her knees uttering silent petitions to heaven, accompanied by the frequent and irrepressible sobs and tears of her weeping maidens. The father's heart, stung with remorse, bled within him,—for no one could doubt the issue of the conflict. At last the marshals of the field gave the expected signal, the thunder of the horses' hoofs beat heavily on the ear—it was followed by a momentary crash, and the Saracen's opponent rolled horse and man on the yellow dust. No one wondered at this termination, yet the certainty that one chance, weak as it was, was lost, chilled the hearts of the father and his daughter.

No sooner was the first conflict terminated than the other knight presented himself, and the Saracen again returned to his station. Again a period of dread suspense occurred, and again at the sound of the trumpet, the combatants gave the spur to their steeds. They met half-way, and now, for the moment, hope rallied in the breasts of the partisans of Alzavar for so well directed was the lance of the Christian knight, that his opponent seemed to reel in the saddle. It was but for an instant, however, for speedily recovering himself, he bore on his

adversary with such force, that the knight's horse slightly rearing, fell upon his haunches, whilst his rider, discomfited by the animal's movements, was unable to withstand the lance of the Saracen, and sinking on the ground, left to his opponent the field and the honour of victory.

It was then that Estafina, still retaining, from the mysterious event of the preceding evening, the glimmer of a hope that some assistance would yet be rendered her, despatched a messenger to her father, requesting that the lists might be kept open till sunset, to await the possibility of the arrival of some third champion. To this arrangement the Saracen had no power to object; and retiring to a tent which was pitched close by the lists, he partook of the refreshments which had been prepared, and awaited the arrival of a new opponent.

The hours were passing swiftly, and Estafina looked in vain from her tower; no knight was visible. Overcome with agony, she lay fainting in the arms of one of her attendants, when a sudden cry of exultation arose from the plain, and awoke her to life and hope. She looked forth and saw, interposed between her and the melting radiance of the setting sun, the dim dark figure of a warrior on horseback. He seemed at a great distance, but advanced with such celerity that he was soon distinctly visible to every eye. A few moments more and he was at the lists, and snatching a horn from one of the pursuivants, sounded a long and loud note of defiance.

That trembling, fluttering thing, a woman's heart, vibrates between the opposite extremes of joy and sorrow, and hopes and fears, with such enthusiasm, that it was not strange that Estafina, casting off every shadow of a doubt, considered herself as already rescued, and half rebuked the damsel who expressed a hope that the new comer might be successful.

It was evident, to those on the field, that the Saracen did not prepare for the contest with so much indifference as he had

previously manifested. His antagonist was, indeed, in appearance, a man not rashly to be encountered. His height and bulk were remarkable, and seemed to require all the strength of the large-made sinewy black steed that bore him. His armour was sable, a broad gold chain hung around his neck, and the mantle which flowed around his form was marked with a blood-red cross. A large plume of black feathers streamed above his helmet.

All was in readiness. The followers of the Saracen seemed dismayed, whilst those of Alzavar gazed on the scene with confident anticipations. The warriors started on their course, and the earth absolutely quaked beneath the rapid beat of their chargers' feet. The red-cross knight descended like a thunderbolt on his adversary; the violence of his attack was irresistible, and the Saracen, hurled headlong from his seat, lay senseless and motionless on the earth.

To talk of the joy which inspired Alzavar and his daughter would be idle. To the acknowledgments which were heaped upon their deliverer, he answered only by his gestures. He spoke not, and when pressed to remove his helmet, declined, by a wave of his hand, compliance with the request. To Estafina, his appearance and demeanour were a subject of fearful interest, for in him she well recognized her warrior ancestor of the picture. To her expressions of gratitude he replied with a courteous inclination of his head, but not even to her could he be prevailed upon to speak. All were astonished, but too deeply indebted to the stranger to question him on the peculiarities of his demeanour.

When pressed to partake of their evening meal, he assented, and sat down with the rest of the company to the banquet. It was richly and variously heaped, and luscious spiced wines mantled in golden goblets upon the table. Alzavar pledged his guest, who lifted in return the cup, and seemed about to raise his vizor to drink, when at that moment the priest arose and

pronounced the customary blessing. The stranger knight replaced the cup, and folding his arms on the board, reclined his head upon them. After he had continued a short time in that posture, his host intimated his apprehensions that his guest was wounded, and desired some one near him to remove his helmet. This request was no sooner complied with than the guests sprang from the board with a start of horror; beneath the helmet all was void. Dismay and confusion filled every breast, whilst, amid the perturbation that ensued, the empty armour fell rattling to the ground.

# A Scottish Tradition

## *A Leaf from a Winter's Journal in London*

*By* JANE PORTER

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1827

# Jane Porter

JANE PORTER (1776-1850) *was not a novelist of great talent, yet her name is known today by many who are totally ignorant of her literary superiors. Nearly every schoolboy has thrilled to the heroic death of William Wallace as described in* THE SCOTTISH CHIEFS (1810), *and many have had their introduction to fiction by way of that lively and pathetic story. This, however, was not Miss Porter's first excursion into historical fiction (and it should be noted to her credit that she antedates Scott);* THADDEUS OF WARSAW *had been a prime favorite seven years before. These two books were translated into German and Russian. When republished currently in English they still enjoy a brisk sale. Perhaps they do not represent finished or subtle art, but they have pleased a heterogeneous group of readers for a hundred and twenty-five years; that is a record which should justify any novelist. "A Scottish Tradition" is interesting for its extended portrait of Sir Walter Scott, as well as for the story itself, which, though a trifle weepy in the melancholy Scottish fashion, is nevertheless typical of the author's crisp narrative style.*

# A Scottish Tradition

THE FIRST TIME I saw Sir Walter Scott was by chance. I happened to call in at one of the club-houses so fashionable in the metropolis, and to several of which my passion for studying the human character had stimulated me to gain an *entrée*. This was one of rather general resort, not being confined, like many others, to the members of any particular profession or pursuit. On entering a little comfortable room, usually frequented by those who preferred a few hours' social chat, in a quiet corner, to passing the whole of a wet morning in the larger and more crowded apartments, over billiards or the newspapers, I found about half a dozen persons, all known to me excepting two gentlemen, neither of whom I had seen before. One of my old acquaintances nodded to me as I approached, pointing, with a significant silence and gesture, to a vacant chair. While I obeyed his finger, and took the seat, he turned with a bowing attentiveness to one of the strangers, whose discourse had evidently been interrupted by the opening of the room door. All present seemed, by their looks, to share the impatience of my friend for his recommencement. Mechanically I directed my eyes and ears towards the object of attraction. He was circumstantially relating a curious matter of traditionary history, connected with a noble cavalier of the north (an ancestor of his own, I suspect), which happened during the troublous times of the year forty-five. It told well for the disinterested attachment of a brave man to a prince of fallen fortunes, and pleased me; but one or two romantic incidents concerning this gallant knight's protection, *sans peur, sans reproche*, of an unfortunate lady, who had followed the

royal fugitive over sea, still further excited my sympathy. While the narrator went on with his story, I scanned him with the curiosity with which one is apt to regard an unusually entertaining person, whose name is entirely unknown to us. There was nothing about him that denoted him of the *caste* of visitants I commonly found at these London clubs. He was no author-like looking man, pale with laborious study, or glowing with the elation of conscious fame. Neither did he seem a military or a naval character; nor had he the aspect of the church, nor of the bar; nor did he appear at all like a *blue-stocking dandy;* for we have such, both in literature and taste, as eminent as of the toilet! "By his tongue, even if his story did not tell it," apostrophized I to myself, "I should know he came from north of the Tweed. Assuredly, then, he must be one of those *stalwarth lairds* of whom we now hear so much! living on their own paternal lands—stewards alike for themselves and the tenantry by whose ploughs they profit!"

I judged this from an intelligent shrewdness in his countenance, which sufficiently proved him not to be a man to trust those concerns in another's hand he could manage himself; while a certain benevolence shone in his eye, that as plainly indicated the natural kindness of his disposition. In speaking more precisely of his physiognomy, according to the rules of Spurzheim and Lavater, I would say, that his head (which a closely cut crop of darkish hair, a little straggling on the deeply-indented lofty brow, amply defined), might be *topographied* into all the hills and valleys of sound sense and penetrating intellect. His face presented features of a corresponding mould, and in what we might call rather a roughly-chiselled outline. Small, deep-set eyes; a short nose; with a remarkably long space between it and his most singularly expressive mouth, which, when not speaking, closed with peculiar firmness, while a constant and almost playful inflection of the parts around it

gave such an animation to his silence, that, when I knew who he was, I noted this commonly misdeemed inharmonious distance between his features, as the very registering place where the varied characters of his wit and genius were imprinted in legible promise. The figure attached to this marked style of countenance, was of the middle order both in height and bulk, and apparelled without any pretension—a plain setting, indeed, best setting off such men. His diction partook of the same character—clear, forcible; not a word of ornament, excepting when the subject took that shape; and then the eloquence, or poetry of the language, lay in the objects of the scene, the circumstances of the adventure, or the nature of the sentiments expressed—not a jot in the dress of his phrases. He spoke in rather a broad Scotch tone, and used not a few of his native words and turns of expression, which, while they gave an air of more genuine truth to his narrative, imparted a something of homeliness to the manner, exciting perhaps a double interest by the very simplicity of the means. One of our audience, however, a young Oxonian, I perceived once or twice looked rather impatient at the frequent occurrence of these local terms. Had they been Greek they might, perhaps, have been more welcome to him than to most of us! but the muse of Robin Burns had long ago made every pithy scotticism translatable to me, and I continued to listen to the stranger with a yet more rivetted attention, while he recounted his hero's various extraordinary escapes, in bringing back his fair undone countrywoman from her ill-starred wanderings with a still more undone prince. Her name, during the recital, he evidently avoided mentioning; but my old acquaintance, who had seemed to take the lead in mute observance of the story, as evidently showing he did not choose to be submissively put off, abruptly asked—"Whether he did not mean the celebrated Flora Macdonald?"

"No," was the point blank reply, though with a courteous

bend of the body, that somewhat softened the direct rebuke. Everybody smiled, in spite of their own curiosity, sharing the reprimanded question; but he rose on the instant, and shaking our discomfited spokesman by the hand while bidding him good morning, turned with the same frank air of kindly farewell to the rest of the company, and walked away to withdraw. I then observed he was lame, halting a little on one foot; and on the door closing after him, was going to ask his name, when his late interrogator saved me the trouble, by suddenly exclaiming—"Ah, there he goes—true author of Waverley! occult in speech as on paper! and by this very mystery now, showing plainly that Flora Macdonald and his unfortunate lady were *bona fide* the same forlorn damsel."

"No, you are quite mistaken;" reiterated a veteran-looking person, of the middle age but with grey hairs, who had hitherto sat totally, and apparently abstractedly, silent, in a sort of brown study, throughout the whole of the recital. He was the other stranger I had remarked on my entrance. My self-assured acquaintance started at this second quiet but firm denial, gazing on the speaker with surprise. The gentleman of grey hairs, and as grey a surtout, calmly continued.

"Flora Macdonald derived no real misfortune from the part her heroism performed in the rescue of her native prince. A generous principle of loyalty alone was her motive; and having effected his escape from the threatened death, which by proclamation had been declared should succeed his being taken prisoner, she saw him embark from the beach of Scotland—and saw him no more. She indeed was left to the temporary resentment of the power she had baffled; but that over, to the lasting respect of all, even amongst her prince's enemies, who pity fallen greatness; for she was a virtuous woman!"

While our former interrogator was settling with himself how to digest this second and conclusive discomfiture of his sagacity,

the Oxonian, with something of smiling compliment in his air, ventured to ask the respectable informant—"How he knew all this, since he spoke too legitimate English sound and phrase, to have sprung north of the Cheviot?"

"That is as it may be," was the reply. "Nevertheless, I have been long enough there, to have seen Flora Macdonald, and to have known her well. She was then, indeed, an old woman, but bore the traces of former beauty, in her large dark eyes, and in a mouth still wearing a singular expression of dignity and sweetness. She had been the wife of a brave and honourable man of his own name and clan; and was the mother of two children, a son and daughter, who have since proved worthy of their blood. She was a widow when I became acquainted with her, living revered and beloved; and when I last saw her, it was amongst her descendants to the second generation."

The narrator paused; but on perceiving us all bend silently forward, as though wishing to learn more, he added, with evident pleasure at our attention,—"One of these young people, a grand-daughter of hers, told me some years ago, that a member of our present royal family chancing to hear the venerable lady was then still alive, and residing at Edinburgh, and supposing her circumstances might, in common with others, have suffered lasting dilapidation in the past unhappy times, caused it to be intimated to her 'that he was desirous of administering to her comforts, from a just feeling, that the protectoress of one British prince in misfortune, should be repaid in her own necessity, by the assistance of another in more prosperous days.' She answered, 'that her means were equal to her wants and her wishes;' and declined the offer, though with becoming respect and gratitude. Such, then, gentlemen, was Flora Macdonald!—spotless in youth, disinterested in age. She is now dead and buried; and well might it be written on her tombstone—

"Death, ere thou strike such another,
Brave, and fair, and pure as she,
Time shall throw his dart at thee!"

There was a sort of thoughtful hush for a moment or two after the gentleman had ceased speaking, who, meanwhile, took his stick from the floor, where it had fallen, and then rose to depart. Our Oxford student immediately started from his chair also, and broke the silence by exclaiming—"We thank you, sir, for this anecdote; and beg the Scottish heroine's pardon. Yet certainly it has always been a general impression with us Southrons, that Flora Macdonald was at least in love with the young Pretender!"

"Then you see, sir," replied the veteran, "that, notwithstanding the smoke in the adage, general impressions are not always to be relied on. Beside, from a little adventure that occurred to myself in my youth, I have a guess at the unhappy lady of Sir Walter's tale." He was moving away with the last word, but I put my hand on his arm, and earnestly begged him to satisfy our curiosity, with a knowledge of who so interesting a person as Sir Walter's unfortunate lady really was.

"As to that, I can only speak from conjecture," returned he; "yet you shall know my premises:—if it indeed be granted fair, to offer conjecture on aught yon great master of the human heart would seem to conceal." He smiled as he spoke, but with an expression of countenance we could not quite understand, and then turned his head, as if the expression of his eyes should not help us out with a meaning himself did not choose we should read very plainly. With one voice, however, we all urged him to indulge us with his surmise at least, and with a civil sort of force pressed him down into the seat he had just vacated. "It is but a heathen practice," cried he, laughing, "to make an oracle speak by compulsion! However, you shall have it." He then gazed on the floor a moment or two, appearing to recollect with a tender pensiveness, the days he was to recall, and then began:—

"What I shall relate, happened many years before I saw

Flora Macdonald. I was a little boy, and had been playing on the grass before the door of my mother's house, in a rather sequestered village, though only a mile from Edinburgh. The evening was very sultry; and, while at my amusement, I looked up frequently, to observe a gentleman walking to and fro in in the pathway beyond the grass, and of sufficiently singular appearance to attract the notice of a child. He was a person of a slight figure, dressed in deep, faded mourning, and with the extraordinary appendage to such a garb, of a tartan plaid wrapped round him in the military fashion. This, when I saw him near, appeared also tarnished in its colours, and rent in various places. He held a rose in his hand, to which he at times seemed earnestly talking; sometimes walking fast, sometimes slow; but by his step he appeared feeble, and a child readily concluded he must be old. After a little while, he sat down on a broken bench, backed by the hollow branchless trunk of the once May-garlanded tree of the village. When I became a man, I often remembered the strange coincidence of the living, with the inanimate object. He was seated at no great distance from me, and taking off his hat, wiped his forehead with a handkerchief he took from his bosom, after having carefully placed the rose there. His hair was of a silver whiteness; and it reminded me of my dear kind grandfather, who had not been long dead. I got up, and ran to him; and, taking his hand, asked him to go in to my mother, who would give him something to wash and cool his brow, as she used to do to my grandpapa, when he was sick, before he died. I never shall forget the poor gentleman's countenance and manner, when I thus spoke to him, and hung by his hand; nor can I ever forget that hand, so small, so white, and soft, as I played with it and caressed it, in my beseechings that he would go in with me; for I saw tears stealing down his cheeks, while he gazed silently upon me. My young eyes gazed with admiring pity on his face. Its surface

seemed soft as his hand, and was fair, even to lily paleness, excepting where many small blue veins traversed the delicately moulded chin. In short, every feature of that faded face had been shaped to beauty. The eyes, of then dimmed azure blue, were yet sweeter than any I have since looked upon. The scattered grey hairs, or rather locks of snowy whiteness, hung partially over them. There were no wrinkles on the brow, nor on the cheek; but there was a marking—I know not what to call it—that told that youth was fled! Sorrow, too, had stamped its frequent track; and, child as I was, I well knew its characters; I had read them often on my mother's waning features, for she was a widow.

"While I was still addressing to him my unavailing entreaties, my mother herself descried us from our parlour window; and attracted by the extraordinary appearance of the stranger, and my clinging position, came out herself, and approached us. I met her eagerly, telling her of the old gentleman;—for what is not absolutely young, is always absolutely old, to children, —of his fatigue and tears, and refusal to come and rest himself under our roof. My mother drew near, and her persuasions were soon successful. The stranger rose from the bench; I offered him my shoulder to lean on; he placed the little white hand there, and we led him into the house. Seated in our parlour, while the refreshment my mother had called for was spreading before him, his eyes roamed around the apartment, fixing where my deceased grandfather's plumed bonnet and sword hung. His plaid, the tartan of our clan, was suspended under them, with the old victor, round shield of Scotland's independent battles. My grandfather's burial 'scutcheon covered the pannel beneath. When the servant left the room, my mother invited her guest to eat, but his attention could not be withdrawn from the objects on which he had fixed his eyes. While he was gazing there, I had been prattling the history, I

had often heard, of those arms; and how he who owned them, had borne them valiantly on the plain of Culloden; where he had been left for dead, after having twice saved the life of his prince in that mortal contest. The stranger then told my mother, with much agitation, that he had been a soldier in his youth.—'I, too, fought and *fell*!' cried he, 'in the year forty-five!— I received a wound—worse than death—I shall never recover from it!' and he put his hand to his head, and looked so wildly melancholy, that my mother drew me towards her. I was then passing her with a knife in my hand, to offer an apple to him, I had culled from the basket on the table. He saw her movement, and too promptly understood it.

" 'Kind lady,' cried he, rising from his chair, 'I told your son I was unfit for any shelter but the wide heavens; yet my wound harms no one but myself,—all the rest of the world are whole, and may be happy!—and why should I talk of things which I see make you fear so poor a worm as I am!'

"He turned, and, with a hurried but firmer step, walked towards the door. His eye was then dry, but my mother's overflowed; memory, as well as pity, was then busy with her own heart. 'You must not go, sir!' cried she; 'if I have undesignedly given pain to the afflicted, my offence is my punishment. Come back! I am a child of sorrow myself! That fatal year deprived this boy of his name and his inheritance!—Come back! whoever you may be; the daughter of—an attainted Scot—requires it of you!'

"The stranger turned, and looked on my mother with a faint colour rising to his cheek; he bowed his head, too, with an air of reverence. His hand was pressed close to his heart, and his lip quivered, yet he smiled. But never shall I forget the anguish of that smile. 'I cannot go back;' he replied; 'I ought never to have come back anywhere. Banishment for sin!—wandering for the desolate!' 'No,' cried my mother, 'the adherents of

Charles Edward were unfortunate;—might be mistaken in their zeal; but their fidelity was no sin! Come, then, and rest awhile with the last descendants of your royal master's truest friend!'

"He became very pale, and trembled much, looking to the door and to the windows, as if he knew not from which to make his escape. His eye was very wild at the moment.—'No, lady,' answered he; 'fidelity is not always holy. I rest no where any more,—my doom is wandering, and I must fulfil it.' There was an expression of long seated woe, in all this half insanity, that went to my mother's soul, and she burst into tears. The stranger was then hurrying to the room door. Something appalled, I hastened to open it, with my eyes anxiously fixed on his face. He stopped—took from out of his vest the rose I had seen him hide there; he put it into my hand.—'There,' said he, 'it is a white one!—Time cannot wither it, else I should not have kept it so many, many years.—Take it, sweet cherub, and lay it on your innocent breast; and when you press it there night and morning, pray God to pardon a breaking heart!'

"I now wept with my mother; while, with a sigh that seemed heaved from the very depths of his soul, he passed through the open door-way. Thence we heard his steps on the paved floor of our little hall, and then out upon the green path. My mother and myself, with yet dripping eyes, looked after him through the parlour window till he totally disappeared at the angle of the village lane.

" 'Who can he be?' muttered she to herself. Inquiry amongst our country neighbours, could bring her to no information; only that such a person as she described, had been seen wandering along the fields towards Edinburgh late in the evening. But our village market-man from that city, two days afterwards, explained the mystery.—A person so apparelled, in crossing the Cannon-gate towards Holyroodhouse had slipped his foot on a stone and fallen; and at the next instant a four-horse dray-

cart, having escaped from its driver, one of its wheels was dragged across the prostrate body. The poor gentleman was taken up insensible, apparently much hurt, and carried by some who had seen the accident, to the city infirmary. One of the party who chanced to be near at the time, and who had been an old jacobite serjeant, bore his share of the litter which conveyed the unfortunate unknown, with a secret and apprehensive curiosity; for he recognized the plaid then covering the deathlike face of the stranger, to be the peculiar check of two colours, worn only by Prince Charles himself when in Scotland. The common royal tartan of the Stuarts was of a distinctly different pattern. He whispered his observations to one of the hospital attendants, a friend of his own; and when the object of their joint particular interest was taken into a ward, and laid before the surgeons, it was discovered that not only an arm was fractured, but two ribs dangerously broken,—and that the sufferer was a woman!"—

"Hah!" we all exclaimed at once; but uttered not a word more, still hanging with close attention on the lips of the speaker. He continued—

"A few hours declared she could not live; when she was told her state, and urged to reveal her name, she wrote with a pencil on a piece of paper,—'I have forfeited my name. But send to the manse of Dunkenneth; for those are there who will come to lay in a decent grave the last remains of an unhappy, distracted wanderer from their Christian care. This handwriting will explain to them who they are called upon to bury—and forget.'

"The paper was sealed and dispatched. The next morning witnessed the arrival of a venerable minister and his aged sister. They acknowledged the sufferer to be their near relation; that for many years she had been visited with occasional fits of mental aberration, but had never before strayed away, even to

a cotter's door, from the deep seclusion in which, during all that time, she had hidden herself, until within the preceding week; and that they, her alarmed friends, were sedulously making every inquiry after the poor fugitive, when their search was so sadly terminated by the delivery of the note brought by the messenger from the Edinburgh infirmary.

"The old couple were conducted to the room of their dying relative; now, perhaps by the loss of blood, restored to her sanest state; and the meeting, which I have frequently heard described by a person then present, drew tears from the sternest spectator. The scene soon ended—She died with her own kindred praying over her. They closed her eyes; and the old lady, after *streeking* the fair, emaciated corpse, wrapped it, first in a linen winding-sheet, and then in Prince Charles's plaid.—It was the one he had worn himself. It had ever since been the cherished covering of that poor mourner's fond, yet penitent bosom; and the pious performer of these last rites, weeping bitterly, told the venerable minister her brother, who had pushed the plaid aside as if with some feeling against its presence there, that she could not bring her conscience to see virtue in separating it from that broken heart. The good man acquiesced; and the same night they took the unhappy lady's remains to their own home, and buried her in the village churchyard. I afterwards visited the grave with my mother. It was green and dewy. I plucked yarrow there, and laid it with the withered rose she gave me. And so slept Jeanie Cameron."

At this termination we all uttered ejaculations of surprise or pity. The narrator, meanwhile, with a deeply pensive expression passing over his whole countenance, stretched out his hand to the table to take his hat, and rose from his chair. We then started from ours, thanking him variously, according to our different temperaments, for the entertainment he had given us. The Oxonian, with a burst of enthusiasm, suddenly exclaimed,

"It is a strange, a most interesting account! and—if I may indeed consider it authentic—I think I could almost make a pilgrimage to that grave myself. Poor, poor Jeanie Cameron!" and the young scholar, something more affected than I could have expected from his volatile demeanour, swept the corner of his glove through the watery twinkle in his eye. The narrator of the story regarded him a moment with a gentle smile, then replied,

" 'Tis true I am unknown here, and you may reasonably doubt a nameless troubadour! But you all know Sir Walter Scott. Ask him, and he will verify the fact, that in his boyhood this tale was told as having just happened in Edinburgh;—that so she wandered,—so she died!"

With the concluding words, his countenance resumed its former placid melancholy; and bowing round to us with the courteous air of one accustomed to pay respect, and to receive it, he left the room.

"Who can he be?" instantly passed from one to the other of us. Nobody knew with whom he had come in. The waiters declared he did not belong to the club; and from that hour, none of our party ever afterwards saw or heard of him.

J. P.

Esher.

# The City of the Demons

*By* WILLIAM MAGINN, ESQ.

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1828

# William Maginn, Esq.

WILLIAM MAGINN (1793-1842) *is known principally as a literary critic. He was a clever Irishman who first attracted notice with his sparkling "O'Doherty Papers" in* BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE. *His pungent wit and gift for sharp satire recommended him to Wilson and Lockhart, and in the establishment of the "Noctes Ambrosianae" they found him extremely useful. In fact, during the early numbers of that popular series Maginn was perhaps the most important figure. Subsequently, he became editor of* FRASER'S MAGAZINE *and gathered about him one of the finest groups of writers in the history of English journalism. His own formal essays and penetrating critical notices have obscured his brilliance as an author of humorous verse and rollicking Irish sketches. "The City of the Demons" presents Maginn in a less familiar garb—that of an Orientalist; but he tells his story with a sincerity which convinces us that he is speaking in character.*

# The City of the Demons

IN DAYS OF YORE, there lived in the flourishing city of Cairo a Hebrew Rabbi, by name Jochonan, who was the most learned of his nation. His fame went over the East, and the most distant people sent their young men to imbibe wisdom from his lips. He was deeply skilled in the traditions of the fathers, and his word on a disputed point was decisive. He was pious, just, temperate and strict; but he had one vice,—a love of gold had seized upon his heart, and he opened not his hand to the poor. Yet he was wealthy above most, his wisdom being to him the source of riches. The Hebrews of the city were grieved at this blemish on the wisest of their people; but though the elders of the tribes continued to reverence him for his fame, the women and children of Cairo called him by no other name than that of Rabbi Jochonan the miser.

None knew, so well as he, the ceremonies necessary for initiation into the religion of Moses; and consequently, the exercise of those solemn offices was to him another source of gain. One day, as he walked in the fields about Cairo, conversing with a youth on the interpretation of the law, it so happened that the angel of death smote the young man suddenly, and he fell dead before the feet of the Rabbi, even while he was yet speaking. When the Rabbi found that the youth was dead, he rent his garments, and glorified the Lord. But his heart was touched, and the thoughts of death troubled him in the visions of the night. He felt uneasy when he reflected on his hardness to the poor, and he said "Blessed be the name of the Lord! The first good thing that I am asked to do, in that holy name, will I

perform,"—but he sighed, for he feared that some one might ask of him a portion of his gold.

While yet he thought upon these things, there came a loud cry at his gate.

"Awake, thou sleeper!" said the voice, "awake! A child is in danger of death, and the mother hath sent me for thee, that thou may'st do thine office."

"The night is dark and gloomy," said the Rabbi, coming to his casement, "and mine age is great; are there not younger men than I in Cairo?"

"For thee only, Rabbi Jochonan, whom some call the wise, but whom others call Rabbi Jochonan the miser, was I sent. Here is gold," said he, taking out a purse of sequins,—"I want not thy labour for nothing. I adjure thee to come, in the name of the living God."

So the Rabbi thought upon the vow he had just made, and he groaned in spirit, for the purse sounded heavy.

"As thou hast adjured me by that name, I go with thee," said he to the man, "but I hope the distance is not far. Put up thy gold."

"The place is at hand," said the stranger, who was a gallant youth, in magnificent attire. "Be speedy, for time presses."

Jochonan arose, dressed himself, and accompanied the stranger, after having carefully locked up all the doors of his house, and deposited his keys in a secret place—at which the stranger smiled.

"I never remember," said the Rabbi, "so dark a night. Be thou to me as a guide, for I can hardly see the way."

"I know it well," replied the stranger with a sigh, "it is a way much frequented, and travelled hourly by many; lean upon mine arm, and fear not."

They journeyed on; and though the darkness was great, yet the Rabbi could see when it occasionally brightened that he

was in a place strange to him. "I thought," said he, "I knew all the country for leagues about Cairo, yet I know not where I am. I hope, young man," said he to his companion, "that thou hast not missed the way;" and his heart misgave him.

"Fear not," returned the stranger. "Your journey is even now done," and, as he spoke, the feet of the Rabbi slipped from under him, and he rolled down a great height. When he recovered, he found that his companion had fallen also, and stood by his side.

"Nay, young man," said the Rabbi, "if thus thou sportest with the grey hairs of age, thy days are numbered. Woe unto him who insults the hoary head!"

The stranger made an excuse, and they journeyed on some little further in silence. The darkness grew less, and the astonished Rabbi, lifting up his eyes, found that they had come to the gates of a city which he had never before seen. Yet he knew all the cities of the land of Egypt, and he had walked but half an hour from his dwelling in Cairo. So he knew not what to think, but followed the man with trembling.

They soon entered the gates of the city, which was lighted up as if there were a festival in every house. The streets were full of revellers, and nothing but a sound of joy could be heard. But when Jochonan looked upon their faces—they were the faces of men pained within; and he saw, by the marks they bore, that they were Mazikin.* He was terrified in his soul; and, by the light of the torches, he looked also upon the face of his companion, and, behold! he saw upon him, too, the mark that showed him to be a Demon. The Rabbi feared excessively—almost to fainting, but he thought it better to be silent, and sadly he followed his guide, who brought him to a splendid house, in the most magnificent quarter of the city.

"Enter here," said the Demon to Jochonan, "for this house is mine.The lady and the child are in the upper chamber;" and,

* Demons.

accordingly, the sorrowful Rabbi ascended the stair to find them.

The lady, whose dazzling beauty was shrouded by melancholy beyond hope, lay in bed; the child, in rich raiment, slumbered on the lap of the nurse, by her side.

"I have brought to thee, light of my eyes!" said the Demon, "Rebecca, beloved of my soul! I have brought thee Rabbi Jochonan the wise, for whom thou didst desire. Let him, then, speedily begin his office; I shall fetch all things necessary, for he is in haste to depart."

He smiled bitterly as he said these words, looking at the Rabbi; and left the room, followed by the nurse.

When Jochonan and the lady were alone, she turned in the bed towards him, and said:—

"Unhappy man that thou art! knowest thou where thou hast been brought?"

"I do," said he, with a heavy groan; "I know that I am in a city of the Mazikin."

"Know then, further," she said, and the tears gushed from eyes brighter than the diamond, "know then, further, that no one is ever brought here, unless he hath sinned before the Lord. What my sin hath been imports not to thee—and I seek not to know thine. But here thou remainest for ever—lost, even as I am lost." And she wept again.

The Rabbi dashed his turban on the ground, and tearing his hair exclaimed, "Woe is me! Who art thou, woman, that speakest to me thus?"

"I am a Hebrew woman," said she, "the daughter of a Doctor of the Laws, in the city of Bagdad, and being brought hither, it matters not how, I am married to a prince among the Mazikin, even him who was sent for thee. And that child, whom thou sawest, is our first-born, and I could not bear the thought that the soul of our innocent babe should perish. I therefore

besought my husband to try to bring hither a priest, that the law of Moses (blessed be his memory!) should be done; and thy fame, which has spread to Bagdad, and lands further towards the rising of the sun, made me think of thee. Now my husband, though great among the Mazikin, is more just than the other Demons; and he loves me, whom he hath ruined, with a love of despair. So he said, that the name of Jochonan the wise was familiar unto him, and that he knew thou wouldst not be able to refuse. What thou hast done, to give him power over thee, is known to thyself."

"I swear, before Heaven," said the Rabbi, "that I have ever diligently kept the law, and walked steadfastly according to the traditions of our fathers, from the day of my youth upward. I have wronged no man in word or deed, and I have daily worshipped the Lord; minutely performing all the ceremonies thereto needful."

"Nay," said the lady, "all this thou mightest have done, and more, and yet be in the power of the Demons. But time passes, for I hear the foot of my husband mounting the stair. There is one chance of thine escape."

"What is that? O lady of beauty!" said the agonized Rabbi.

"Eat not, drink not, nor take fee or reward while here; and as long as thou canst do thus, the Mazikin have no power over thee, dead or alive. Have courage, and persevere."

As she ceased from speaking, her husband entered the room, followed by the nurse, who bore all things requisite for the ministration of the Rabbi. With a heavy heart he performed his duty, and the child was numbered among the faithful. But when, as usual, at the conclusion of the ceremony, the wine was handed round to be tasted by the child, the mother, and the Rabbi, he refused it, when it came to him, saying:—

"Spare me, my lord, for I have made a vow that I fast this day; and I will eat not, neither will I drink."

"Be it as thou pleasest," said the Demon, "I will not that thou shouldst break thy vow:" and he laughed aloud.

So the poor Rabbi was taken into a chamber, looking into a garden, where he passed the remainder of the night and the day, weeping, and praying to the Lord that he would deliver him from the city of Demons. But when the twelfth hour came, and the sun was set, the Prince of the Mazikin came again unto him, and said:—

"Eat now, I pray thee, for the day of thy vow is past;" and he set meat before him.

"Pardon again thy servant, my lord," said Jochonan, "in this thing, I have another vow for this day also. I pray thee be not angry with thy servant."

"I am not angry," said the Demon, "be it as thou pleasest, I respect thy vow:" and he laughed louder than before.

So the Rabbi sat another day in his chamber by the garden, weeping and praying. And when the sun had gone behind the hills, the Prince of the Mazikin again stood before him, and said:—

"Eat now, for thou must be an hungered. It was a sore vow of thine;" and he offered him daintier meats.

And Jochonan felt a strong desire to eat, but he prayed inwardly to the Lord, and the temptation passed, and he answered:—

"Excuse thy servant yet a third time, my lord, that I eat not. I have renewed my vow."

"Be it so then," said the other; "arise, and follow me."

The Demon took a torch in his hand, and led the Rabbi through winding passages of his palace, to the door of a lofty chamber, which he opened with a key that he took from a niche in the wall. On entering the room, Jochonan saw that it was of solid silver, floor, ceiling, walls, even to the threshold and the door-posts. And the curiously carved roof and borders

of the ceiling shone in the torch-light, as if they were the fanciful work of frost. In the midst were heaps of silver money, piled up in immense urns of the same metal, even over the brim.

"Thou hast done me a serviceable act, Rabbi," said the Demon—"take of these what thou pleasest; aye, were it the whole."

"I cannot, my lord," said Jochonan. "I was adjured by thee to come hither in the name of God; and in that name I came, not for fee or for reward."

"Follow me," said the Prince of the Mazikin; and Jochonan did so, into an inner chamber.

It was of gold, as the other was of silver. Its golden roof was supported by pillars and pilasters of gold, resting upon a golden floor. The treasures of the kings of the earth would not purchase one of the four-and-twenty vessels of golden coins, which were disposed in six rows along the room. No wonder! for they were filled by the constant labours of the Demons of the mine. The heart of Jochonan was moved by avarice, when he saw them shining in yellow light, like the autumnal sun, as they reflected the beams of the torch. But God enabled him to persevere.

"These are thine," said the Demon; "one of the vessels which thou beholdest, would make thee richest of the sons of men—and I give thee them all."

But Jochonan refused again; and the Prince of the Mazikin opened the door of a third chamber, which was called the Hall of Diamonds. When the Rabbi entered he screamed aloud, and put his hands over his eyes, for the lustre of the jewels dazzled him, as if he had looked upon the noonday sun. In vases of agate were heaped diamonds beyond numeration, the smallest of which was larger than a pigeon's egg. On alabaster tables lay amethysts, topazes, rubies, beryls, and all other precious stones, wrought by the hands of skilful artists, beyond power of com-

putation. The room was lighted by a carbuncle, which, from the end of the hall, poured its ever living light, brighter than the rays of noontide, but cooler than the gentle radiance of the dewy moon. This was a sore trial on the Rabbi; but he was strengthened from above, and he refused again.

"Thou knowest me then I perceive, O Jochonan, son of Ben-Davis," said the Prince of the Mazikin; "I am a Demon who would tempt thee to destruction. As thou has withstood so far, I tempt thee no more. Thou hast done a service which, though I value it not, is acceptable in the sight of her whose love is dearer to me than the light of life. Sad has been that love to thee, My Rebecca! Why should I do that which would make thy cureless grief more grievous?—You have yet another chamber to see," said he to Jochonan, who had closed his eyes, and was praying fervently to the Lord, beating his breast.

Far different from the other chambers, the one into which the Rabbi was next introduced, was a mean and paltry apartment without furniture. On its filthy walls hung innumerable bunches of rusty keys of all sizes, disposed without order. Among them, to the astonishment of Jochonan, hung the keys of his own house, those which he had put to hide when he came on this miserable journey, and he gazed upon them intently.

"What dost thou see," said the Demon, "that makes thee look so eagerly? Can he who has refused silver and gold, and diamonds, be moved by a paltry bunch of rusty iron?"

"They are mine own, my lord," said the Rabbi; "them will I take, if they be offered me."

"Take them, then," said the Demon, putting them into his hand;—"thou may'st depart. But Rabbi, open not thy house only, when thou returnest to Cairo, but thy heart also. That thou didst not open it before, was that which gave me power over thee. It was well that thou didst one act of charity in coming with me without reward, for it has been thy salvation. Be no more Rabbi Jochonan the miser."

The Rabbi bowed to the ground, and blessed the Lord for his escape. "But how," said he, "am I to return, for I know not the way?"

"Close thine eyes," said the Demon. He did so, and, in the space of a moment, heard the voice of the Prince of the Mazikin ordering him to open them again. And behold, when he opened them, he stood in the centre of his own chamber, in his house at Cairo, with the keys in his hand.

When he recovered from his surprise, and had offered thanksgivings to God, he opened his house, and his heart also. He gave alms to the poor, he cheered the heart of the widow, and lightened the destitution of the orphan. His hospitable board was open to the stranger, and his purse was at the service of all who needed to share it. His life was a perpetual act of benevolence, and the blessings showered upon him by all, were returned bountifully upon him by the hand of God.

But people wondered, and said; "Is not this the man who was called Rabbi Jochonan the miser? What hath made the change?"—And it became a saying in Cairo. When it came to the ears of the Rabbi, he called his friends together, and he avowed his former love of gold, and the danger to which it had exposed him, relating all which has been above told, in the hall of the new palace that he built by the side of the river, on the left hand, as thou goest down the course of the great stream. And wise men, who were scribes, wrote it down from his mouth, for the memory of mankind, that they might profit thereby. And a venerable man, with a beard of snow, who had read it in these books, and at whose feet I sat, that I might learn the wisdom of the old time, told it to me. And I write it in the tongue of England, the merry and the free, on the tenth day of the month Nisan, in the year according to the lesser supputation, five hundred, ninety and seven, that thou may'st learn good thereof. If not, the fault be upon thee.

# The Confession

*By* John Galt, Esq.

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1830

# John Galt

JOHN GALT (1779-1839) *was a Scottish parochial novelist of considerable historical importance and intrinsic merit. Because he saw the possibilities of Scottish vernacular fiction and wrote his* ANNALS OF THE PARISH *before* WAVERLEY, *developing an original and successful technique in the creation of accurate and entertaining village sketches, he is entitled to careful notice in literary histories. And because it reflects a keen and understanding observation of men, enlivened by a delicious sense of humor and a just appreciation of the pathetic, his best work has always been a joy to critic and lay reader alike. Had Galt been in a position to exercise the wise restraint which his friend John Wilson counseled, his more felicitous Scottish stories would not now be buried under the debris of ephemeral hack work to which he was driven by an exasperating series of financial misfortunes. The banality into which he lapsed when he abandoned the simple, unpretentious tales of the common people for the stilted absurdities of fashionable society melodrama nearly engulfed his reputation, but the best things shortly worked their way to the surface. Galt is now enjoying a belated boom, and even his minor work is being republished. "The Confession" is not a Scottish story, unfortunately, but it is one of which Poe would have approved. The tense atmosphere is well sustained, and the effect is deliberate and forceful.*

# The Confession

MY FURLOUGH had nearly expired; and, as I was to leave the village the next morning to join my regiment, then on the point of being shipped off at Portsmouth, for India, several of my old companions spent the evening with me, in the Marquis of Granby. They were joyous, hearty lads; but mirth bred thirst, and drinking begot contention.

I was myself the soberest of the squad, and did what I could to appease their quarrels. The liquor, however, had more power than my persuasion, and at last it so exasperated some foolish difference about a song, between Dick Winlaw and Jem Bradley, that they fell to fighting, and so the party broke up.

Bradley was a handsome, bold, fine fellow, and I had more than once urged him to enlist in our corps. Soon after quitting the house, he joined me in my way home, and I spoke to him again about enlisting, but his blood was still hot—he would abide no reason—he could only swear of the revenge he would inflict upon Winlaw.This led to some remonstrance on my part, for Bradley was to blame in the dispute; till, from less to more, we both grew fierce, and he struck me such a blow in the face, that my bayonet leaped into his heart.

My passion was in the same moment quenched. I saw him dead at my feet—I heard footsteps approaching—I fled towards my father's house—the door was left unbolted for me—I crept softly, but in a flutter, to bed,—but I could not sleep. I was stunned;—a fearful consternation was upon me;—a hurry was in my brain—my mind was fire. I could not believe that I had killed Bradley. I thought it was the nightmare which had so

poisoned my sleep. My tongue became as parched as charcoal; had I been choking with ashes, my throat could not have been filled with more horrible thirst. I breathed as if I were suffocating with the dry dust into which the dead are changed.

After a time, that fit of burning agony went off;—tears came into my eyes;—my nature was softened. I thought of Bradley when we were boys, and of the summer days we had spent together. I never owed him a grudge—his blow was occasioned by the liquor—a freer heart than his, mercy never opened; and I wept like a maiden.

The day at last began to dawn. I had thrown myself on the bed without undressing, and I started up involuntarily, and moved hastily—I should rather say instinctively—towards the door. My father heard the stir, and inquired wherefore I was departing so early. I begged him not to be disturbed; my voice was troubled, and he spoke to me kindly and encouragingly, exhorting me to eschew riotous companions. I could make no reply—indeed I heard no more—there was a blank between his blessing and the time when I found myself crossing the Common, near the place of execution.

But through all that horror and frenzy, I felt not that I had committed a crime—the deed was the doing of a flash. I was conscious I could never in cold blood have harmed a hair of Bradley's head. I considered myself unfortunate, but not guilty; and this fond persuasion so pacified my alarms, that, by the time I reached Portsmouth, I almost thought as lightly of what I had done, as of the fate of the gallant French dragoon, whom I sabred at Salamanca.

But ever and anon, during the course of our long voyage to India, sadder afterthoughts often came upon me. In those trances, I saw, as it were, our pleasant village green, all sparkling again with schoolboys at their pastimes; then I fancied them gathering into groups, and telling the story of the mur-

der; again, moving away in silence towards the churchyard, to look at the grave of poor Bradley. Still, however, I was loth to believe myself a criminal; and so, from day to day, the time passed on, without any outward change revealing what was passing within, to the observance or suspicions of my comrades. When the regiment was sent against the Burmese, the bravery of the war, and the hardships of our adventures, so won me from reflection, that I began almost to forget the accident of that fatal night.

One day, however, while I was waiting in an outer room of the Colonel's quarters, I chanced to take up a London newspaper, and the first thing in it which caught my eye was, an account of the trial and execution of Dick Winlaw, for the murder of Bradley. The dreadful story scorched my eyes;—I read it as if every word had been fire,—it was a wild and wonderful account of all. The farewell party at the Granby was described by the witnesses. I was spoken of by them with kindness and commendation; the quarrel between Bradley and Winlaw was described, as in a picture; and my attempt to restrain them was pointed out by the judge, in his charge to the jury, as a beautiful example of loving old companionship. Winlaw had been found near the body, and the presumptions of guilt were so strong and manifold, that the jury, without retiring, found him guilty. He was executed on the Common, and his body hung in chains. Then it was, that I first felt I was indeed a murderer,—then it was that the molten sulphur of remorse was poured into my bosom, rushing, spreading, burning, and devouring; but it changed not the bronze with which hardship had masked my cheek, nor the steel to which danger had tempered my nerves.

I obeyed the Colonel's orders as unmoved as if nothing had happened. I did my duty with habitual precision—my hand was steady, my limbs were firm; but my tongue was incapable

of uttering a word. My comrades as they came towards me, suddenly halted, and turned aside,—strangers looked at me, as if I bore the impress of some fearful thing. I was removed, as it were, out of myself—I was in another state of being—I was in hell.

Next morning we had a skirmish, in which I received this wound in the knee; and soon afterwards, with other invalids, I was ordered home. We were landed at Portsmouth, and I proceeded to my native village. But in this I had no will nor choice; a chain was around me, which I could not resist, drawing me on. Often did I pause and turn, wishing to change my route; but Fate held me fast, and I was enchanted by the spell of many an old and dear recollection, to revisit those things which had lost all their innocence and holiness to me.

The day had been sultry, the sun set with drowsy eye, and the evening air was moist, warm, and oppressive. It weighed heavily alike on mind and body. I was crippled by my wound, —the journey was longer than my strength could sustain much further,—still I resolved to persevere, for I longed to be again in my father's house; and I fancied were I once there, that the burning in my bosom would abate.

During my absence in India, the new road across the Common had been opened. By the time I reached it, the night was closed in,—a dull, starless, breezeless, dumb, sluggish, and unwholesome night; and those things which still retained in their shapes some blackness, deeper than the darkness, seemed, as I slowly passed by, to be endowed with a mysterious intelligence, with which my spirit would have held communion but for dread.

While I was frozen with the influence of this dreadful phantasy, I saw a pale, glimmering, ineffectual light, rising before me. It was neither lamp, fire, nor candle; and though like, it was yet not flame. I took it at first for the lustre of a reflection from some unseen light, and I walked towards it, in the hope

of finding a cottage or an alehouse, where I might obtain some refreshment and a little rest. I advanced,—its form enlarged, but its beam became no brighter; and the horror, which had for a moment left me when it was first discovered, returned with overwhelming power. I rushed forward, but soon halted,—for I saw that it hung in the air, and as I approached, that it began to take a ghastly and spectral form! I discerned the lineaments of a head, and the hideous outlines of a shapeless anatomy. I stood rivetted to the spot; for I thought that I saw behind it, a dark and vast thing, in whose hand it was held forth. In that moment, a voice said,—"It is Winlaw the murderer; his bones often, in the moist summer nights, shine out in this way; it is thought to be an acknowledgement of his guilt, for he died protesting his innocence."—The person who addressed me was your Honor's gamekeeper, and the story I have told, is the cause of my having desired him to bring me here.

# The Lovers of Vire

*By the author of "Richelieu"*

[G. P. R. James]

From *The Literary Souvenir*, 1831

# G. P. R. James

GEORGE PAYNE RAINSFORD JAMES (1799-1860) *was a historical novelist whose immortality arises chiefly from the fact that he was cruelly burlesqued by Thackeray. A serious historian as well as an ambitious man of letters, James proposed to follow Sir Walter Scott, but succeeded in proving only that a great novelist must have something more than indefatigable energy and a passion for accuracy. He ground out fiction about as quickly and frequently as his mentor; but though carefully plotted and at times dramatically effective, the novels are too often diffuse, pompous, sentimental, and entirely lacking in humor. In* BARBAZURE *Thackeray, in a manner more amusing than accurate, impaled James for all time. That the satirist did not have to resort to caricature, however, is evident when one compares the opening of* BARBAZURE *with that of "The Lovers of Vire."*[29] *James did reduce fiction to a formula—and left himself vulnerable to critical jibes. But he has suffered too much from Thackeray's proscription; his books are better than they are reputed to be. "The Lovers of Vire" is pleasantly sentimental,—a good example of what the public called for and apparently appreciated.*

# The Lovers of Vire

THE SUN was shining as fair as the sun could shine in a beautiful May morning; bright, yet gentle; warm, but fresh; midway between the watering-pot of April and the warming-pan of June, when, in the beautiful valley of Vire—everybody knows Vire—, but, lest there should be anybody in the wide world who does not, dearly beloved reader, I will tell you all about it.

Get into the stage-coach, which journeyeth diurnally between London and Southampton; enjoy the smoothness of the road, bless Mr. M'Adam, put up at the Dolphin, and yield yourself to the full delights of an English four-post bed, for no such sweets shall you know from the moment you set your foot on board the steam-boat for Havre, till the same steam-boat, or another, it matters not which, lands you once more on the English strand.

Supposing you then arrived at Havre—get out of it again as fast as you can; rush across the river to Honfleurs; from Honfleurs dart back to Caen; and after you have paused five minutes to think about William the Conqueror, put yourself into the diligence for St. Malo, and when you have travelled just twelve leagues and a half, you will come to a long steep hill, crowned by a pretty airy-looking town, whose buildings, in some parts gathered on the very pinnacle, in others running far down the slope, seem as if coquetting with the rich valleys that woo them from below.

Go to bed; and if you bathe your feet beforehand, which if you are of my faction you will do, walk over the tiled floor of the inn bedroom, that you may have a fit opportunity of curs-

ing tiled floors, and of relieving yourself of all the spleen in your nature before the next morning. Then, if both your lover and the day be favourably disposed, sally forth to the eastern corner of the town, and you will have a fair view over one of the loveliest valleys that nature's profuse hand ever gifted with beauty. The soft clear stream of the Vire winding steeply along between the green sloping hills and the rich woods, and the fields and chateaux, and hamlets, and the sunshine catching upon all its meanderings, and the birds singing it their song of love, as its calm waters roll bountifully by them. Look upon it, and you will not find it difficult to imagine how the soul, even of an obscure artisan in a remote age, warmed into poetry and music in the bosom of that valley, and by the side of that stream.

It was, then, in that beautiful Vale of Vire, some twenty years agone, that François Lormier went out to take his last May walk with Mariette Duval, ere the relentless conscription called him from his happy home, his sweet valleys and his early love. It was a sad walk, as may well be imagined; for though the morning was bright, and nature, to her shame be it spoken, had put on her gayest smiles as if to mock their sorrow, yet the sunshine of the scene could not find its way to their hearts, and all seemed darkened and clouded around them. They talked a great deal, and they talked a long time; but far be it from me to betray their private conversation. I would not, for all the world—especially as I know not one word about it—except, indeed, that François Lormier vowed the image of Mariette should remain with him for ever; should inspire him in the battle, and cheer him in the bivouac; and that Mariette protested she would never marry anybody except François Lormier, even if rich old Monsieur Latoussefort, the great Foulan, were to lay himself and fortune at her feet; and in short, that when his "seven long years were out," François would find her still a spinster, and very much at his service. "Mais si je per-

dois une jambe!" said François Lormier.—"Qu'est ce que c'a fait?" replied Mariette.

They parted,—and first to follow the lady. Mariette wept a great deal, but soon after got calm again, went about her ordinary work, sang her song, danced at the village fête, talked with the talkers, laughed with the laughers, and won the hearts of all the youths in the place, by her unadorned beauty and her native grace. But still she did not forget François Lormier; and when any one came to ask her in marriage, the good dame her mother referred them directly to Mariette, who always had her answer ready, and with a kind word and a gentle look sent them away refused, but not offended. At length good old Monsieur Latoussefort presented himself with all his money bags, declaring that his only wish was to enrich his gentille Mariette; but Mariette was steady, and so touchingly did she talk to him about poor François Lormier, that the old man went away with the tears in his eye. Six months afterwards he died, when to the wonder of the whole place, he left his large fortune to Mariette Duval!

In the meanwhile François joined the army, and from a light handsome conscript, he soon became a brave, steady soldier. Attached to the great Northern army, he underwent all the hardships of the campaigns in Poland and Russia, but still he never lost his cheerfulness, for the thought of Mariette kept his heart warm, and even a Russian winter could not freeze him. All through that miserable retreat, he made the best of everything. As long as he had a good tender piece of saddle, he did not want a dinner; and when he met with a comfortable dead horse to creep into, he found board and lodging combined. His courage and his powers of endurance called upon him, from the first, the eyes of one whose best quality was the impartiality of his recompense. François was rewarded as well as he could be rewarded; but at length, in one of those unfortunate battles by

which Napoleon strove in vain to retrieve his fortune, the young soldier in the midst of his gallant daring was desperately wounded in the arm.

Pass we over the rest.—Mutilated; sick, weary and ragged, François approached his native valley, and doubtful of his reception—for misery makes sad misanthropes—he sought the cottage of Madame Duval. The cottage was gone; and on inquiring for Madame Duval, he was directed to a fine farmhouse by the banks of the stream. He thought there must be some mistake, but yet he dragged his heavy limbs thither, and knocked timidly against the door.

"Entrez!" cried the good-humoured voice of the old Dame. François entered, and unbidden tottered to a chair. Madame Duval gazed on him for a moment, and then rushing to the stairs called loudly, Come down, Mariette, come down, here is François returned! Like lightning, Mariette darted down the stairs, saw the soldier's old great coat, and flew towards it—stopped—gazed on his haggard face, and empty sleeve; and gasping, fixed her eyes upon his countenance. 'Twas for a moment she gazed on him thus, in silence; but there was no forgetfulness, nor coldness, nor pride about her heart—there was sorrow, and joy, and love, and memory in her very glance. "Oh François, François!" cried she, at length, casting her arms round his neck, "how thou hast suffered!" As she did so, the old great coat fell back, and on his breast appeared the golden cross of the legion of honour. "*N'importe*!" cried she, as she saw it, "*Voilà ta récompense*." He pressed her fondly to his bosom. "My recompense is here," said he, "my recompense is here!"

# Seeking the Houdy

*By the Ettrick Shepherd*

[James Hogg]

From *The Forget-Me-Not*, 1830

# James Hogg

James Hogg (1770-1835) *was a delightful Scot of rare talent and unique accomplishment. Even the story of Burns's intellectual growth is not so romantic as his. Hogg's entire schooling consisted of six months in the first grade! At eighteen the only verses he had seen were the metrical* Psalms. *At twenty-six, never having heard of Burns, he began to compose poetry; but so little did he know of calligraphy that committing the verses to paper was almost beyond him. Yet such was his progress once opportunities presented themselves that he lived to see his name take rank with the greatest literary geniuses of his native land.*

*Hogg spent his early years as a herdboy and shepherd. When he tried to "crash" Edinburgh's select literary circles, he was caricatured unfairly in the "Noctes Ambrosianae" as "the Ettrick Shepherd." The name stuck, and so did the character. The imaginary dialogues between "Christopher North" and the "Ettrick Shepherd" make superb reading; the satire was subsequently toned down.*

*His short stories are uniformly excellent, combining the border spirit of romance and adventure with a feeling for supernatural mysticism which one associates with Highland Celts. "Seeking the Houdy" (midwife) accents the latter interest.*

# Seeking the Houdy

THERE WAS a shepherd on the lands of Meggat-dale, who once set out riding with might and main, under cloud of night, for that most important and necessary personage in a remote and mountainous country, called by a different name in every country of the world, excepting perhaps Egypt and England; but by the Highlanders most expressively termed *bean-glhuine*, or *te the toctor*.

The mare that Robin rode was a black one, with a white face like a cow. She had a great big belly, a switch tail, and a back, Robin said, as sharp as a knife; but perhaps this part of the description was rather exaggerated. However, she was laziness itself personified, and the worst thing of all, her foal was closed in at home; for Robin had wiled the mare and foal into the bire with a piece of bread, which he did not give her after all, but put in his pocket in case of further necessity: he then whipped a hair halter on the mare's head, and the straw sunks on her back, these being the only equipment within his reach; and it having cost Robin a great deal of trouble to get the foal into the bire, he now eyed him with an exulting and at the same time a malicious, look. "Ye mischievous rascal," said he, "I think I have you now; stand you there an' chack fleas till I come back to teach you better manners."

Robin then hurried out the mare to the side of the kail-yard dike, and calling out to Jean his wife not to be in ower grit a hurry, and to exercise all the patience she was mistress of, he flew on the yaud's back, and off he went at full gallop.

The hair halter that Robin rode with, had a wooden snibbelt upon the end of it, as all hair halters had erewhile, when there

were no other bridles in Meggat, saving branks and hair halters annexed; consequently with the further end of this halter one could hit an exceeding hard stroke. Indeed, I never saw anything in my life that hurt so sore as a hair halter and wooden snibbelt at the end of it; and I may here mention, as an instance of its efficacy, that there was once a boy at Hartwood mines, near Selkirk, who killed with a snibbelt two Highland soldiers, who came to press his horses in *the forty-five*.

Well, to this halter and snibbelt Robin had trusted for a rod, there being no wood in Meggat-dale, not so much as a tree; and a more unlucky and dangerous goad he could scarcely have possessed, and that the black mare, with a white face like a cow, felt to her experience. Robin galloped by the light of the full moon down by the Butt-haugh and Glengaber-foot about as fast as a good horse walks; still he was galloping, and could make no more of it, although he was every now and then lending the yaud a yerk on the flank with the snibbelt. But when he came to Henderland, to which place the mare was accustomed to go every week to meet the eggler, then Robin and the mare split in their opinions. Robin thought it the most natural and reasonable thing in the world that the mare should push on to the Sandbed, about eight miles further, to bring home the wise woman to his beloved wife's assistance. The mare thought exactly the reverse, being inwardly convinced that the most natural and reasonable path she could take was the one straight home again to her foal; and without any farther ceremony, save giving a few switches with her long ill-shapen tail, she set herself with all her might to dispute the point with Robin.

Then there was such a battle commenced as never was fought at the foot of Henderland-bank at midnight either before or since. O my beloved and respected editor and readers! I wish I could make you understand the humour of this battle as well

as I do. The branks were two sticks hung by a headsteel, which, when one drew the halter hard, nipped the beast's nose most terribly; but then they were all made in one way, and could only turn the beast to the near side. Now the black mare did not, or could not, resist this agency of the branks; she turned round as often as Robin liked, but not one step farther would she proceed on the road to Sandbed. So roundabout and roundabout the two went; and the mare, by a very clever expedient, contrived at every circle to work twice her own length nearer home. Saint Sampson! how Robin did lay on with the halter and snibbelt whenever he got her head round towards the way he wanted her to go! No—round she came again! He cursed her, he flattered her, he reminded her of the precarious state of her mistress, who had so often filled her manger; but all would not do: she thought only of the precarious state of her foal, closed in an old void smearing-house.

Robin at last fell upon a new stratagem, which was this, that as the mare wheeled round whenever her head reached the right point, he hit her a yerk with the wooden snibbelt on the near cheek, to stop that millstone motion of hers. This occasioned some furious plunges, but no advancement the right way, till at length he hit her such a pernicious blow somewhere near about the ear, that he brought her smack to the earth in a moment and so much was he irritated, that he laid on her when down, and nodding like one falling asleep. After two or three prolonged groans, she rose again, and, thus candidly admonished, made no further resistance for the present, but moved on apace to the time of the halter and the snibbelt. On reaching a ravine called Capper Cleuch, the mare, coming again in some degree to her senses, perceived that she was not where she ought to have been, at least where it was her interest, and the interest of her foal, that she should have been; and, raising her white face, she uttered a tremendous neigh.

The hills to the left are there steep and rocky; and the night being calm and frosty, first one fine echo neighed out of the hill, then another, and then another. "There are plenty of foals here," thought the old mare; and neighing again even louder than before, she was again answered in the same way; and perceiving an old crabbed thorn-tree among the rocks, in the direction whence the echo proceeded, it struck her obtuse head that it was her great lubber of a foal standing on very perilous ground; and off she set at a right angle from the road, or rather a left one, with her utmost speed, braying as she went, while every scream was returned by her shaggy colt with interest. It was in vain that Robin pulled by the hair halter, and smote her on the cheek with the wooden snibbelt: away she ran, through long heath and large stones, with a tremendous and uncultivated rapidity, neighing as she flew. "Wo! ye jaud! Hap-wo! chywooo!" shouted Robin; "Hap-wo! hap-wo! Devil confound the beast, for I'm gone!"

Nothing would stay her velocity till she stabled herself against a rock over which she could not win, and then Robin lost no time in throwing himself from her back. Many and bitter were the epithets he there bestowed on his old mare, and grievous was the lamentation he made for his wife, as endeavoring to lead back the mare from the rocky hill into the miserable track of a road. Not the plague o' one foot would the mare move in that direction! She held out her long nose, with her white muslin face, straight up to heaven, as if contemplating the moon. She weened that her foal was up among the crags, and put on a resolution not to leave him a second time for any man's pleasure. After all, Robin confessed that he had some excuse for her, for the shadow of the old thorn was so like a colt, that he could scarcely reason himself out of the belief that it was one.

Robin was now hardly set indeed, for the mare would not lead a step; and when he came back to her side to leather her

with the snibbelt, she only galloped round him and round him, and neighed. "O plague on you for a beast that ever you were foaled!" exclaimed Robin; "I shall lose a dearly beloved wife, and perhaps a couple of babies at least, and all owing to your stupidity and obstinacy! I could soon run on foot to the Sandbed, but then I cannot carry the midwife home on my back; and could I once get you there you would not be long in bringing us both home again. Plague on you for a beast, if I winna knock your brains out!"

Robin now attacked the mare's white face with the snibbelt, yerk for yerk, so potently, that the mare soon grew madly crazed, and came plunging and floundering from the hill at a great rate. Robin thus found out a secret not before known in this country, on which he acted till the day of his death; namely, "that the best way to make a horse spring forward is to strike it on the face."

Once more on the path, Robin again mounted, sparing neither the mare nor the halter; while the mare, at every five or six paces, entertained him with a bray so loud, with its accompanying nicker, that every one made the hills ring again.

There is scarcely any thing a man likes worse than this constant neighing of the steed he rides upon, especially by night. It makes him start as from a reverie, and puts his whole frame in commotion. Robin did not like it more than other men. It caused him inadvertently to utter some imprecations on the mare, that he confessed he should not have uttered; but it also caused him to say some short prayers for perservation; and to which of these agencies he owed the following singular adventure he never could divine.

Robin had got only about half a mile farther on his road, when his mare ceased her braying, and all at once stood stone-still, cocking her large ears, and looking exceedingly frightened. "Oho, madam! what's the matter now?" said Robin; "is this

another stratagem to mar my journey, for all the haste that you see me in? Get on, my fine yaud, get on! There is nothing uncanny there."

Robin coaxed thus, as well to keep up his own spirits as to encourage his mare; for the truth is, that his hair began to stand on end with affright. The mare would neither ride, lead, nor drive one step further; but there she stood, staring, snuffing the wind, and snorting so loud, that it was frightsome to hear as well as to see her. This was the worst dilemma of all. What was our forlorn shepherd to do now? He averred that the mare *would not* go on either by force or art; but I am greatly deceived, if by this time he durst for his life have gone on, even though the mare could have been induced to proceed. He took the next natural expedient, which was that of shouting out as loud as he could bellow, "Hilloa! who's there? Be ye devils, be ye witches, or be ye Christian creatures, rise an' shaw yoursels. I say, hilloa! who's there?"

Robin was at this time standing hanging by the mare's hair halter with both his hands, for she was capering and flinging up her white face with such violence, that she sometimes made him bob off the ground; when, behold! at his last call, a being like a woman rose from among some deep heather bushes about twenty yards before him. She was like an elderly female, dressed in a coarse country garb, tall and erect; and there she stood for a space, with her pale face, on which the moon shone full, turned straight towards Robin. He then heard her muttering something to herself; and, with a half-stifled laugh, she stooped down, and lifted something from among the heath, which Robin thought resembled a baby. "There the gipsy yaud has been murdering that poor bairn!" thought Robin to himself: "it was nae wonder my auld yaud was frighted! she kens what's what, for as contrarysome as she is. And murderess though the hizzy be, it is out o' my power to pursue her wi'

this positive auld hack, for no another foot nearer her will she move."

Robin never thought but that the mysterious being was to fly from him, or at least go off the road to one side; but in place of that she rolled her baby, or bundle, or whatever it was, deliberately up in a blanket, fastened it between her shoulders, and came straight up to the place where Robin stood hanging by his mare's head. The mare was perfectly mad. She reared, snorted, and whisked her long ill-shaped tail; but Robin held her, for he was a strong young man, and the hair halter must have been proportionably so, else it never could have stood the exercise of that eventful night.

Though I have heard Robin tell the story oftener than once when I was a boy, there was always a confusion here which I never understood. This may be accounted for, in some measure, by supposing that Robin was himself in such perplexity and confusion, that he neither knew well what passed, nor remembered it afterwards. As far as I recollect, the following was the dialogue that passed between the two.

"Wha's this?"

"What need ye speer, goodman? kend fo'k, gin it war daylight."

"I think I'm a wee bit at a loss. I dinna ken ye."

"May be no, for ye never saw me afore. An' yet it is a queer thing for a father no to ken his ain daughter."

"Ay, that wad be a queer thing indeed. But where are you gaun at this time o' the night?"

"Where am I gaun? where but up to the Craigyrigg, to get part o' my ain blithemeat. But where are you riding at sic a rate?"

"Why, I'm just riding my whole might for the houdy: an' that's very true, I hae little need to stand claverin here wi' you."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, daddy Robin! It is four hours sin' ye came frae hame, an' ye're no won three miles yet. Why, man, afore ye get to the Sandbed an' hame again, you daughter will be ready for spaining."

"Daughter! what's a' this about a daughter? Has my dear Jean really a daughter?"

"You may be sure she has, else I could not have been here."

"An' has she only ane? for od! ye maun ken, wifie, that I expectit twa at the fewest. But I dinna understand you. I wish ye may be canny enough, for my white-faced yaud seems to jalouse otherwise."

"Ye dinna ken me, Robin, but ye will ken me. I am Helen Grieve. I was well brought up, and married to a respectable farmer's son; but he turned out a villain, and, among other qualifications, was a notorious thief; so that I have been reduced to this that you see, to travel the country with a pack, and lend women a helping hand in their hour o' need. An', Robin, when you and I meet here again, you may be preparing for another world."

"I dinna comprehend ye at a', wifie. No; a' that I can do, I canna comprehend ye. But I understand thus far. It seems ye are a houdy, or a meedwife, as the grit fo'ks will ca' you. Now that's the very thing I want at present, for your helping hand may be needfu' yonder. Come on ahint me, and we'll soon be hame."

I must give the expedition home in Robin's own words.

"Weel, I forces my yaud into the Cleuch-brae, contrary as she was, wi' her white face, for she had learned by this time to take a wee care o' the timmer snibbelt. I was on her back in a jiffey; an', to say truth, the kerling wi' the pale round face, and the bit lang bundle on her back, wasna slack; for she was on ahint me, bundle an' a', ere ever I kend I was on mysel. But, Gude forgie us! sickan a voyage as we gat! I declare my

yaud gae a snort that gart a' the hills ring, an' the verra fire flew frae her snirls. Out o' the Cleuch-brae she sprang, as there hadna been a bane or a joint within her hide, but her hale carcass made o' steel springs; an' ower bush, ower breer, ower stock, an' ower stane she flew, I declare, an' so be it, faster than ever an eagle flew through the firmament of the heavens.

"I kend then that I had either a witch or a mermaid on ahint me; but how was I now to get quit o' her? The hair halter had lost a' power, and I had no other shift left, but to fix by instinct on the mane wi' baith hands, an' cry out to the mare to stop. 'Wo ye auld viper o' the pit! wo, ye beast o' Bashan!' I cries in outer desperation; but ay the louder I cried, the faster did the glyde flee. She snored, an' she grained, an' she reirdit baith ahint an' afore; an' on she dashed, regardless of a' danger.

"I soon lost sight o' the ground—off gaed my bonnet, an' away i' the wind—off gaed my plaid, an' away i' the wind; an' there was I sitting lootching forret, cleaving the wind like an arrow out of a bow, an' my een rinning pouring like streams of water from the south. At length we came to the Birk-bush Linn! and alangst the very verge of that awesome precipice there was my dementit beast scouring like a fiery dragon. 'Lord preserve me!' cried I loud out; an' I hadna weel said the word, till my mare gae a tremendous plunge ower something, I never kend what it was, and then down she came on her nose. No rider could stand this concussion, an' I declare, an' so be it, the meedwife lost her hard, and ower the precipice she flew head fore-most. I just gat ae glisk o' her as she was gaun ower the top o' the birk-bush like a shot stern, an' I heard her gie a waw like a cat; an' that was the last sight I saw o' her.

"I was then hanging by the mane an' the right hough; an' during the moment that my mare took to gather hersel' up, I recovered my seat, but only on the top o' the shoulder, for I couldna win to the right place. The mare flew on as madly as

ever; and frae the shoulder I came on to the neck, an' forret, an' forret, piecemeal, till, just as I came to my ain door, I had gotten a grip o' baith the lugs. The foal gae a screed of a nicher; on which the glyde threw up her white face wi' sic a vengeance, that she gart me play at pitch-an'-toss up in the air. The foal nichered, an' the mare nichered, an' out came the kimmers; an' I declare, an' so be it, there was I lying in the gutter senseless, wanting the plaid, an' wanting the bonnet, an' nae meedwife at a'; an' that's the truth, sir, I declare, an' so be it.

"Then they carried me in, an' they washed me, an' they bathed me, an' at last I came to mysel'; an', to be sure, I had gotten a bonny daughter, an' a' things war gaun on *as well as could be expectit*. 'What hae ye made o' your plaid, Robin?' says ane. 'Where's your bonnet, Robin?' says another. 'But, gudeness guide us! what's come o' the houdy, Robin? Where's the the meedwife, Robin?' cried they a' at aince. I trow this question gart me glower as I had seen a ghaist. 'Och! huh!' cried the wives, an' held up their hands; 'something has happened! something has happened! We see by his looks!—Robin! what has happened? Where's the meedwife?'

" 'Haud your tongue, Janet Reive; an' haud ye your tongue too, Eppie Dickson,' says I, 'an' dinna speer that question at me again; for the houdy is where the Lord will, an' where my white-faced yaud was pleased to pit her, and that's in the howe o' the Birk-bush Linn. Gin she be a human creature, she a' dashed to pieces: but an she be nae a human creature she may gang where she like for me; an' that's true, I declare, an' so be it.' "

Now it must strike every reader, as it did me at first and for many years afterwards, that this mysterious nocturnal wanderer gave a most confused and unintelligible account of herself. She was Robin's daughter; her name was Helen Grieve; she was married to such and such a man; and had now become

a pedlar, and acted occasionally as a midwife: and finally, when they two met there again, it would be time for Robin to be preparing for another state of existence. Now, in the first place, Robin never had a daughter till that very hour and instant when the woman rose out of the heather-bush and accosted him. All the rest appeared to him like a confused dream, of which he had no comprehension, save that he could never again be prevailed on to pass that way alone by night; for he had an impression that at some time or other he should meet with her again.

But by far the most curious part of this story is yet to come, and it shall be related in few words. Robin went with some others, as soon as it was day, to the Birk-bush Linn, but there was neither body nor blood to be seen, nor any appearance of a person having been killed or hurt. Robin's daughter was christened by the name of Helen after her maternal grandmother, so that her name was actually Helen Grieve: and from the time that Robin first saw his daughter, there never was a day on which some of her looks did not bring the mysterious midwife to his mind. Thus far the story had proceeded when I heard it related; for I lived twelve months in the family, and the girl was then only about seven years of age. But, strange to relate, the midwife's short history of herself has turned out the exact history of this once lovely girl's life; and Robin, a few days before his death, met her at the Kirk Cleuch, with a bundle on her back, and recognized his old friend in every lineament and article of attire. He related this to his wife as a secret, but added, that "he did not know whether it was his *real* daughter whom he met or not."

Many are the traditions remaining in the country, relative to the seeking of midwives, or houdies, as they are universally denominated all over the south of Scotland; and strange adventures are related as having happened in these precipitate

excursions, which were proverbially certain to happen by night. Indeed it would appear, that there hardly ever was a midwife brought, but some incident occurred indicative of the fate or fortunes of the little forthcoming stranger; but amongst them all, I have selected this as the most remarkable.

I am exceedingly grieved at the discontinuance of midwifery, that primitive and original calling, in this primitive and original country; for never were there such merry groups in Scotland as the midwives and their kimmers in former days, and never was there such store of capital stories and gossip circulated as on these occasions. But those days are over! and alack, and wo is me! no future old shepherd shall tell another tale of SEEKING THE HOUDY!

# Old Matthew, the Matseller

*By* Miss Mary Russell Mitford

From *The Forget-Me-Not*, 1833

# Mary Russell Mitford

Mary Russell Mitford (1787-1855) *was the most thoroughly charming writer the annuals garnered. And judging by the tributes from her scores of literary friends, her writings are only a reflection of her extraordinary personality. Because she took her cue from Jane Austen and refused to be long diverted from the pleasant stream of fiction on which she was peculiarly at home, there is a delightful uniformity in both her style and her subject-matter. The style is quiet description and the subject-matter is the sequestered life of a rural crossroads. Over a period of years she continued sketching her gardens, her neighbors, her dogs, village sports, country festivals, and the progress of the seasons. There is little excitement and almost no story interest, but the characters are introduced so gracefully and the prose is so vivid that the whole is lent an atmosphere of bright animation. Miss Mitford's stories appeared in five series under the collective title* Our Village. *All exhibit the same apparent spontaneity, the same deceptive ease. She knew her strength and her limitations as did Sarah Orne Jewett, with whom she invites comparison. Each of these splendid writers knew her metier and refused to be cajoled out of it. Miss Mitford was, in her day, one of the few writers of the short story who was a master of her craft. "Old Matthew, the Matseller" is a fine example of the thing Miss Mitford does best. The locale is Belford Regis (actually Reading), an idyllic spot which is the setting for many of her stories. The technique is quite modern.*

# Old Matthew, the Matseller

WE ARE persons of great regularity in our small affairs of every class, from the petty dealings of housekeeping to the larger commerce of acquaintanceship. The friends who have once planted us by their fireside, and made us feel as if at home there, can no more get rid of our occasional presence than they could root out that other tenacious vegetable, the Jerusalem artichoke; even if they were to pull us up by the stalk and toss us over the wall (an experiment by the way, which, to do them justice, they have never tried) I do verily believe, that in the course of a few months we should spring up again in the very same place; and our tradespeople, trifling as is the advantage to be derived from our custom, may yet reckon upon it with equal certainty. They are, as it happens, civil, honest, and respectable, the first people in their line in the good town of B.; but, were they otherwise, the circumstance would hardly affect our invincible constancy. The world is divided between the two great empires of habit and novelty, the young following pretty generally in the train of the new-fangled sovereign, whilst we of an elder generation adhere with similar fidelity to the *ancien régime*. I, especially, am the very bond-slave of habit—love old friends, old faces, old books, old scenery, old flowers, old associations of every sort and kind—nay, although a woman, and one not averse to that degree of decoration which belongs to the suitable and the becoming, I even love old fashions and old clothes; and can so little comprehend why we should tire of a thing because we have had it long, that a favourite pelisse having become shabby, I this very day procured with some difficulty silk of the exact colour and shade,

and, having ordered it to be made in direct conformity with the old pattern, shall have the satisfaction next Sunday of donning a new dress, which my neighbors, the shoemaker's wife and the baker's daughters, who have in their heads an absolute inventory of my apparel, will infallibly mistake for the old one.

After this striking instance, the courteous reader will have no difficulty in comprehending that the same "auld-lang-syne" feeling, which leads me to think no violets so fragrant as those which grow on a certain sunny bank in Kibes Lane, and no cherries so sweet as those from the great mayduke, on the south wall of our old garden, should also induce me to prefer before all oranges those which come from Mrs. Pearce's shop, at the corner of the churchyard in B.—a shop which we have frequented ever since I knew what an orange was; and for the same reason to rank before all the biscuits which ever were invented a certain most seducing, thin, and crisp composition as light as foam and as tasteless as spring water, the handiwork of Mrs. Perry, of the aforesaid illustrious borough. The oranges and the biscuits are good in themselves, but some of their superiority is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the partiality generated by habit.

One of the persons with whom we had in our small way dealt longest and whom we liked best, was old Matthew, the matseller. As surely as February came, would Matthew present his bent person and withered though still ruddy face at our door, with the tree rush mats which he knew that our cottage required; and as surely did he receive fifteen shillings, lawful money of Great Britain, in return for his commodity, notwithstanding an occasional remonstrance from some flippant housemaid or domineering cook, who would endeavour to send him off with an assurance that his price was double that usually given, and that no mat ever made with rushes was or could be

worth five shillings. "His honour always deals with me," was Matthew's mild response, and an appeal to the parlour never failed to settle matters to his entire satisfaction. In point of fact, Matthew's mats were honestly worth the money; and we enjoyed in this case the triple satisfaction of making a fair bargain, dealing with an old acquaintance, and relieving, in the best way, that of employment, the wants of age and of poverty; for, although Matthew's apparel was accurately clean and tidy, and his thin, wrinkled cheek as hale and ruddy as a summer apple, yet the countless patches on his various garments, and the spare, trembling figure, bent almost double and crippled with rheumatism, told a too legible story of infirmity and penury. Except on his annual visit with his merchandise, we never saw the good old matmaker; nor did I even know where he resided until the want of an additional mat for my greenhouse, towards the end of last April, induced me to make enquiry concerning his habitation.

I had no difficulty in obtaining a direction to his dwelling, and found that, for a poor old matmaker, Matthew was a person of more consideration and note in our little world than I could have expected, being, in a word, one of the honestest, soberest, and most industrious, men in our neighbourhood.

He lived I found, in Barkham Dingle, a deep woodland dell, communicating with a large tract of unenclosed moors and commons in the next parish, convenient doubtless to Matthew, as affording the rushes of which his mats were constructed, as well as heath for brooms, of which he was said to have lately established a manufacture, and which were almost equally celebrated for durability and excellence with the articles that he had made for so many years. In Barkham Dingle lived old Matthew, with his grand-daughter Bessy, a lass also renowned for industry and good-humour; and, one fine afternoon towards the end of April, I set forth in my little pony-phaeton, driven

by that model of all youthful servingmen, our boy John, to make my purchase.

Our road lay through a labyrinth of cross-country lanes, intermingled with tiny patches of village greens, where every here and there a score or two of sheep, the small flock of some petty farmer, were nestled with their young lambs among the golden gorse and the feathery broom, and which started up, bleating, at the sound of our wheels and the sight of Dash (far too well-bred a dog to dream of molesting them) as if our peaceful procession had really been something to be frightened at. Rooks were wheeling above our heads, wood-pigeons flying across the fields; the shrill cry of the plover mixed with the sweet song of the nightingale and the monotonous call of the cuckoo; whilst every hedge echoed with the thousand notes of the blackbird, the linnet, the thrush, and "all the finches of the grove." Geese and ducks, with their train of callow younglings, were dabbling in every pool; little bands of straggling children were wandering through the lanes; every thing, in short, gave token of the loveliest of the seasons, the fresh and joyous spring. Vegetation was, however, unusually backward. The blossom of the sloe, called by the country people "the blackthorn winter," still lingered in the hedges, mingling its snowy garlands with the deep, rich brown of the budding oak and the tender green of the elm; the primroses of March still mingled with the cowslips, pansies, orchises, and wild hyacinths of April; and the flower of the turnip was only just beginning to diffuse its honeyed odours (equal in fragrance to the balmy tassels of the lime) in the most sheltered nooks or the sunniest exposures; the "blessed sun" himself seemed rather bright than warm; the season was, in short, full three weeks backwarder than it should have been according to the almanac. Still it was spring, beautiful spring! and, as we drew near to the old beechwood called Barkham Dingle, we felt in its perfection all the charm of the scene and the hour.

Although the country was unenclosed, as had been fully proved by the last half mile of undulating common, interspersed by old shaggy trees and patches (islets, as it were) of tangled underwood, as well as by a few rough ponies and small cows belonging to the country people, yet the lanes had been intersected by frequent gates, from the last of which a pretty, little, rosy, smiling girl, to whom I had tossed a penny for opening it, had sprung across the common, like a fawn, to be ready with her services at that leading into the Dingle, down which a rude cart-track, seldom used unless for the conveyance of faggots or brushwood, led by a picturesque but by no means easy descent.

Leaving chaise, and steed, and driver, to wait our return, at the gate, Dash and I pursued our way by a winding yet still precipitous path to the bottom of the dell. Nothing could be more beautiful than the scene. On every side, steep, shelving banks, clothed with magnificent oaks and beeches, the growth of centuries, descended gradually, like some vast amphitheatre, to a clear, deep piece of water, lying like a mirror in the midst of the dark woods, and letting light and sunshine into the picture. The leaves of the beech were just bursting into a tender green from their shining sheaths, and the oaks bore still the rich brown, which of their unnumbered tints is perhaps the loveliest; but every here and there a scattered horse-chesnut, or plane, or sycamore, had assumed its summer verdure; the weeping birch, "the lady of the woods," was breaking from the bud, the holly glittering in its unvaried glossiness, the hawthorn and the briar rose in full leaf; and, the ivy and woodbine twisting their bright wreaths over the rugged trunks of the gigantic forest-trees, green formed even now the prevailing colour of the wood. The ground, indeed, was enamelled with flowers like a parterre. Primroses, cowslips, pansies, orchises, ground-ivy and wild-hyacinths, were blended in gorgeous pro-

fusion with the bright wood vetch, the light wood anemone, and the delicate wood-sorrel, which sprang from the mossy roots of the beeches, unrivalled in grace and beauty, more elegant even than the lily of the valley that grew by its side. Nothing could exceed the delightfulness of that winding wood-walk.

I soon came in sight of the place of my destination, a low-browed thatched cottage, perched like a wild duck's nest at the very edge of the pool, and surrounded by a little garden redeemed from the forest, a small clearing where cultivated flowers, and beds of berry-bushes, and pear and cherry trees, in full blossom, contrasted strangely yet pleasantly with the wild scenery around.

The cottage was very small, yet it had the air of snugness and comfort which one loves to associate with the dwellings of the industrious peasantry. A goodly faggot-pile, a donkey-shed, and a pigsty, evidently inhabited, confirmed this impression; and geese and ducks swimming in the water, and chickens straying about the door, added to the cheerfulness of the picture.

As I approached, I recognized an old acquaintance in a young girl, who, with a straw basket in her hand, was engaged in feeding the cocks and hens—no less a person than pretty Bessy the poultry-woman, who was celebrated for rearing the earliest ducks and the fattest and whitest chickens ever seen in these parts. Any Wednesday or Saturday morning, during the spring or summer, might Bessy be seen on the road to B., tripping along by the side of her little cart, hardly larger than a wheelbarrow, drawn by a sedate and venerable donkey, and laden with coops full of cackling or babbling inmates, together with baskets of fresh eggs—for Bessy's commodities were as much prized at the breakfast as at the dinner table. She meant, I believe, to keep B. market; but somehow or other she seldom reached it; the quality of her merchandise being held in such

estimation by the families around, that her coops and baskets were generally emptied before they gained their place of destination.

Perhaps the popularity of the vender had something to do with the rapid sale of her poultryware. Never did any one more completely realize the *beau ideal* of a young, happy, innocent, country girl than Matthew's daughter. Fresh and fair, her rosy cheeks mantling with blushes, and her cherry lips breaking into smiles, she was the very milk-maid of Isaac Walton; and there was an old-fashioned neatness and simplicity, a complete absence of all finery, in her attire, together with a modest sweetness in her sound young voice, a rustic grace in her little curtsy, and, above all, a total unconsciousness of her charms, which not only heightened the effect but deepened and strengthened the impression. No one that ever had seen them could forget Bess's innocent smiles.

At present, however, the poor girl was evidently in no smiling mood; and as I was thridding with care and labour the labyrinths of an oak newly felled and partly barked, which lay across the path, to the great improvement of its picturesqueness (there are few objects that so much enhance the beauty of woodland scenery) and the equal augmentation of its difficulty, I could not help observing how agitated and preoccupied the little damsel seemed. Her cheek had lost its colour, her step was faltering, and the trembling hand with which she was distributing the corn from her basket could hardly perform its task. Her head was turned anxiously towards the door, as if something important were going forward within the house; and it was not until I was actually by her side, and called her by name, that she perceived me.

The afternoon, although bright and pleasant for the season, was one of those in which the sun sometimes amuses himself by playing at bopeep. The sky had become overcast shortly after

I entered the Dingle, and, by the time I had surmounted the last tall jutting bare bough of the oak, some of the branches of which I was fain to scramble over and some to creep through, and had fairly reached the cottage door, a sudden shower was whistling through the trees with such violence as to render both Dash and myself very glad to accept Bessy's embarrassed invitation and get under shelter from the pelting of the storm.

My entrance occasioned an immediate and somewhat awkward pause in a discussion that had been carried on, apparently with considerable warmth, between my good old host, Matthew, who, with a half-finished mat in his hand, was sitting in a low, wicker chair on one side of the hearth, and a visiter also of my acquaintance, who was standing against the window; and, with a natural feeling of repugnance to such an intrusion, I had hardly taken the seat offered me by Bessy and given my commission to her grandfather, before I proposed to go away, saying that I saw they were busy, that the rain was nothing, that I had a carriage waiting, that I particularly wished to get home, and so forth—all the civil falsehoods, in short, with which one attempts to escape from an uncomfortable situation.

My attempts were, however, altogether useless. Bessy would not hear of my departure; Farmer White, my fellow visitor, assured me that the rain was coming down harder than ever; and the old Matmaker declared that, so far from my being in the way, all the world was welcome to hear what he had to say, and he had just been wishing for some discreet body to judge of the farmer's behaviour. And, the farmer professing himself willing that I should be made acquainted with the matter, and perfectly ready to abide by my opinion, provided it coincided with his own, I resumed my seat opposite to Matthew, whilst poor Bessy, blushing and ashamed, placed herself on a low stool in a corner of the little room, and began making friends with Dash.

"The long and the short of the matter is, ma'am," quoth old Matthew, "that Jem White—I dare say you know Jem; he's a good lad and a 'dustrious—and my Bessy there—and she's a good girl and a 'dustrious too, tho' I say it that should not say it—have been keeping company like, for these two years past; and now, just as I thought they were going to marry and settle in the world, down comes his father, the farmer there, and wants him to marry another wench and be false-hearted to my girl."

"I never knew that he courted her, ma'am, till last night," interrupted the farmer.

"And who does he want Jem to marry?" pursued the old man, warming as he went on. "Who but Farmer Brookes's fine daughter 'Gusta—Miss 'Gusta, as they call her—who's just come back from boarding school and goes about the country in her silks and her satins, with her veils and her fine, worked bags—who but she! as if she was a lady born, like madam there! Now, my Bessy—"

"I have not a word to say against Bessy," again interrupted the farmer; "she's a good girl, and a pretty girl, and an industrious girl. I have not a word to say against Bessy. But the fact is that I have had an offer of the Holm Farm for Jem, and therefore—"

"And a fine farmer's wife 'Gusta Brookes will make!" quoth the Matmaker, interrupting Master White in his turn. "A pretty farmer's wife! She that can do nothing on earth but jabber French, and read printed books, and thump on the music! Now, there's my girl can milk, and churn, and bake, and brew, and cook, and wash, and make, and mend, and rear poultry—there are not such ducks and chickens as Bessy's for ten miles round. Ask madam—she always deals with Bessy, and so do all the gentlefolks between here and B."

"I am not saying a word against Bessy," replied Farmer

White; "she's a good girl, and a pretty girl, as I said before, and I am very sorry for the whole affair. But the Holm Farm is a largish concern, and will take a good sum of money to stock it—more money than I can command; and Augusta Brookes, besides what her father can do for her at his death, has four hundred pounds of her own left her by her grandmother, which, with what I can spare, will be about enough for the purpose, and that made me think of the match, though the matter is still quite unsettled. But, Master Matthew, one can't expect that Bessy, good girl as she is, should have any money—"

"Oh, that's it!" exclaimed the old man of the mats. "You don't object to the wench then, nor to her old grandfather, if 'twas not for the money?"

"Not in the least," replied the farmer; "she's a good girl and a pretty girl. I like her full as well as Augusta Brookes, and I am afraid that Jem likes her much better. And, as for yourself, Master Matthew, why, I've known you these fifty years, and never heard man, woman or child, speak a misword of you in my life. I respect you, man! And I am heartily sorry to vex you and that good little girl younder. Don't cry so, Bessy! pray don't cry!" and the good-natured farmer well nigh cried for company.

"No, don't cry, Bessy, because there's no need," rejoined her grandfather. "I thought mayhap it was out of pride that Farmer White would not suffer Jem to marry my little girl. But, since it's only the money"—continued the old man, fumbling amidst a vast variety of well-patched garments, until from the pocket of some under-jacket he produced a greasy, brown leather book—"since 'tis only Miss 'Gusta's money, that's wanted to stock the Holm, why that's but reasonable; and we'll see whether your four hundred won't go as far as her's. Look at them dirty bits of paper, farmer—they're of the right

sort, an't they?" cried Matthew, with a chuckle. "I called 'em in, because I thought they'd be wanted for her portion, like; and, when the old Matmaker dies, there'll be a hundred or two more into the bargain. Take the money, man, can't ye? and don't look so 'stounded. It's honestly come by, I promise you. All 'dustry and 'conomy like. Her father, he was 'dustrious too, and he left her a bit; and her mother, she was 'dustrious too, and she left her a bit; and I, tho' I should not say it, have been 'dustrious all my life; and she, poor thing, is more 'dustrious than any of us. Ay, that's right. Give her a hearty kiss, man; and call in Jem—I'll warrant he's not far off—and we'll fix the wedding-day over a jug of home-brewed. And madam there," pursued the happy old man, as with most sincere congratulations and good wishes I rose to depart, "madam there, who looks so pleased and speaks so kindly, may be sure of her mat. I'm a 'dustrious man, tho' I say it that should not say it, and Bessy's a 'dustrious girl, and in my mind there's nothing beats 'dustry in high or in low."

And, with this axiom from the old Matmaker, Dash and I took our leave of four as happy people—for by this time Jem had joined the party—as could well be found under the sun.

# The Trial of Love

*By the author of "Frankenstein"*

[Mary Shelley]

From *The Keepsake*, 1835

# Mary Shelley

MARY GODWIN SHELLEY (1797-1851) *has two claims on immortality; she was the wife of the poet, and the author of* FRANKENSTEIN. *Most commentators find something significant in the conjunction, feeling that only the stimulation of Shelley's interest can account for a work of genius from a rather pedestrian intelligence. A perusal of her minor fiction to some degree substantiates this claim, for there is much that is flimsy and uninspired. But Mary Shelley knew a great deal about the novelist's art; and if her work has not withstood the test of time, it is because in the main she was subservient to the literary conventions of her day.* FRANKENSTEIN, *however, is not only the most original of the Gothic novels, but it is also free from the absurdities to which that form was liable. Her short stories, on the other hand, are purely derivative in technique and totally unconvincing. Richard Garnett some years ago collected the stories which Mrs. Shelley contributed to the annuals. "The Trial of Love" apparently escaped his attention; so it is here reprinted for the first time. Modern taste will disapprove the sentimental plot, but the story is sustained by the saving grace of a few good touches of characterization and description.*

# The Trial of Love

HAVING obtained leave from the Signora Priora to go out for a few hours, Angeline, who was a boarder at the convent of Sant' Anna, in the little town of Este, in Lombardy, set out on her visit. She was dressed with simplicity and taste; her faziola covered her head and shoulders; and from beneath, gleamed her large black eyes, which were singularly beautiful. And yet she was not, perhaps, strictly handsome; but, she had a brow smooth, open, and noble; a profusion of dark silken hair, and a clear, delicate, though brunette complexion. She had, too, an intelligent and thoughtful expression of countenance; her mind appeared often to commune with itself; and there was every token that she was deeply interested in, and often pleased with, the thoughts that filled it. She was of humble birth: her father had been steward to Count Moncenigo, a Venetian nobleman; her mother had been foster-mother to his only daughter. Both her parents were dead; they had left her comparatively rich; and she was a prize sought by all the young men of the class under nobility; but Angeline lived retired in her convent, and encouraged none of them.

She had not been outside its walls for many months; and she felt almost frightened as she found herself among the lanes that led beyond the town, and up the Euganean hills, to Villa Moncenigo, whither she was bending her steps. Every portion of the way was familiar to her. The Countess Moncenigo had died in childbirth of her second child, and from that time, Angeline's mother had lived at the villa. The family consisted of the Count, who was always, except during a few weeks in

the autumn, at Venice, and the two children. Ludovico, the son, was early settled at Padua, for the sake of his education, and then Faustine only remained, who was five years younger than Angeline.

Faustine was the loveliest little thing in the world; unlike an Italian, she had laughing blue eyes, a brilliant complexion, and auburne hair; she had a sylph-like form, slender, round, and springy; she was very pretty, and vivacious, and self-willed, with a thousand winning ways, that rendered it delightful to yield to her. Angeline was like an elder sister; she waited on Faustina; she yielded to her in every thing; a word or smile of hers, was all-powerful. "I love her too much," she would sometimes say; "but I would endure any misery rather than see a tear in her eye." It was Angeline's character to concentrate her feelings, and to nurse them till they became passions; while excellent principles, and the sincerest piety, prevented her from being led astray by them.

Three years before, Angeline had, by the death of her mother, been left quite an orphan, and she and Faustina went to live at the convent of Sant' Anna, in the town of Este; but a year after, Faustina, then fifteen, was sent to complete her education at a very celebrated convent in Venice, whose aristocratic doors were closed against her ignoble companion. Now, at the age of seventeen, having finished her education, she returned home, and came to Villa Moncenigo with her father, to pass the months of September and October. They arrived this very night, and Angeline was on her way from her convent, to see and embrace her dearest companion.

There was something maternal in Angeline's feelings—five years make a considerable difference at the ages of ten to fifteen, and much, at seventeen and two-and-twenty. "The dear child," thought Angeline, as she walked along, "she must be grown taller, and, I dare say, more beautiful than ever. How I

long to see her, with her sweet arch smile! I wonder if she found any one at her Venetian convent to humour and spoil her, as I did here—to take the blame of her faults, and indulge her in her caprices. Ah! those days are gone!—she will be thinking now of becoming a sposa.* I wonder if she has felt any thing of love." Angeline sighed. "I shall hear all about it soon—she will tell me every thing, I am sure.—And I wish I might tell her—secrecy and mystery are so very hateful; but I must keep my vow, and in a month it will be all over—in a month I shall know my fate. In a month!—shall I see him then?—shall I ever see him again! But I will not think of that, I will only think of Faustine—sweet, beloved Faustine!"

And now Angeline was toiling up the hill side; she heard her name called; and on the terrace that overlooked the road, leaning over the balustrade, was the dear object of her thoughts—the pretty Faustine, the little fairy girl, blooming in youth, and smiling with happiness. Angeline's heart warmed to her with redoubled fondness.

Soon they were in each other's arms; and Faustine laughed, and her eyes sparkled, and she began to relate all the events of her two years' life, and showed herself as self-willed, childish, and yet as engaging and caressing as ever. Angeline listened with delight, gazed on her dimpled cheeks, sparkling eyes, and graceful gestures, in a perfect, though silent, transport of admiration. She would have had no time to tell her own story, had she been so inclined, Faustine talked so fast.

"Do you know, Angelinetta mia," said she, "I am to become a sposa this winter?"

"And who is the Signor Sposino?"

"I don't know yet; but during next carnival he is to be found. He must be very rich and very noble, papa says; and I say he must be very young, and very good-tempered, and give me my own way, as you have always done, Angelina carina."

* The name given in Italy to a betrothed girl.

At length Angeline rose to take leave. Faustine did not like her going—she wanted her to stay all night—she would send to the convent to get the Priora's leave; but Angeline, knowing that this was not to be obtained, was resolved to go, and at last, persuaded her friend to consent to her departure. The next day, Faustine would come herself to the convent to pay her old friends a visit, and Angeline could return with her in the evening, if the Priora would allow it. When this plan had been discussed and arranged, with one more embrace, they separated; and, tripping down the road, Angeline looked up, and Faustina looked down from the terrace, and waved her hand to her and smiled. Angeline was delighted with her kindness, her loveliness, the animation and sprightliness of her manner and conversation. She thought of her, at first, to the exclusion of every other idea, till, at a turn in the road, some circumstance recalled her thoughts to herself. "O, how too happy I shall be," she thought, "if he prove true!—with Faustine and Ippolito, life will be Paradise!" And then she traced back in her faithful memory, all that had occurred during the last two years. In the briefest possible way, we must do the same.

Faustine had gone to Venice, and Angeline was left alone in her convent. Though she did not much attach herself to any one, she became intimate with Camilla della Toretta, a young lady from Bologna. Camilla's brother came to see her, and Angeline accompanied her in the parlour to receive his visit. Ippolito fell desperately in love, and Angeline was won to return his affection. All her feelings were earnest and passionate; and yet, she could regulate their effects, and her conduct was irreproachable. Ippolito, on the contrary, was fiery and impetuous; he loved ardently, and could brook no opposition to the fulfilment of his wishes. He resolved on marriage, but being noble, feared his father's disapprobation; still it was

necessary to seek his consent; and the old aristocrat, full of alarm and indignation, came to Este, resolved to use every measure to separate the lovers for ever. The gentleness and goodness of Angeline softened his anger, and his son's despair moved his compassion. He disapproved of the marriage, yet he could not wonder that Ippolito desired to unite himself to so much beauty and sweetness: and then, again, he reflected, that his son was very young, and might change his mind, and reproach him for his too easy acquiescence. He therefore made a compromise; he would give his consent in one year from that time, provided the young pair would engage themselves, by the most solemn oath, not to hold any communication by speech or letter during that interval. It was understood that this was to be a year of trial; that no engagement was to be considered to subsist until its expiration; when, if they continued faithful, their constancy would meet its reward. No doubt the father supposed, and even hoped, that, during their absence, Ippolito would change his sentiments, and form a more suitable attachment.

Kneeling before the cross, the lovers engaged themselves to one year of silence and separation; Angeline, with her eyes lighted up by gratitude and hope; Ippolito, full of rage and despair at this interruption to his felicity, to which he never would have assented, had not Angeline used every persuasion, every command, to instigate him to compliance; declaring, that unless he obeyed his father, she would seclude herself in her cell, and spontaneously become a prisoner, until the termination of the prescribed period. Ippolito took the vow, therefore, and immediately after set out for Paris.

One month only was now wanting before the year should have expired; and it cannot be wondered that Angeline's thoughts wandered from her sweet Faustina, to dwell on her own fate. Joined to the vow of absence, had been a promise to

keep their attachment, and all concerning it, a profound secret from every human being, during the same term. Angeline consented readily (for her friend was away) not to come back till the stipulated period; but the latter had returned, and now, the concealment weighed on Angeline's conscience; there was no help—she must keep her word.

With all these thoughts occupying her, she had reached the foot of the hill, and was ascending again the one on which the town of Este stands, when she heard a rustling in the vineyard that bordered one side of the road—footsteps—and a well-known voice speaking her name.

"Santa Vergine! Ippolito!" she exclaimed, "Is this your promise?"

"And is this your reception of me?" he replied, reproachfully. "Unkind one! because I am not cold enough to stay away—because this last month was an intolerable eternity, you turn from me—you wish me gone. It is true, then, what I have heard—you love another! Ah! my journey will not be fruitless—I shall learn who he is, and revenge your falsehood."

Angeline darted a glance full of wonder and reproach; but she was silent, and continued her way. It was in her heart not to break her vow, and so to draw down the curse of heaven on their attachment. She resolved not to be induced to say another word; and, by her steady adherence to her oath, to obtain forgiveness for his infringement. She walked very quickly, feeling happy and miserable at the same time—and yet not so—happiness was the genuine, engrossing sentiment; but she feared, partly her lover's anger, and more, the dreadful consequences that might ensue from his breach of his solemn vow. Her eyes were radiant with love and joy, but her lips seemed glued together; and resolved not to speak, she drew her faziola close round her face, that he might not even see it, as she walked speedily on, her eyes fixed on the ground. Burning with rage,

pouring forth torrents of reproaches, Ippolito kept close to her side—now reproaching her for infidelity—now swearing revenge—now describing and lauding his own constancy and immutable love. It was a pleasant, though a dangerous theme. Angeline was tempted a thousand times to reward him by declaring her own unaltered feelings; but she overcame the desire, and, taking her rosary in her hand, began to tell her beads. They drew near the town, and finding that she was not to be persuaded, Ippolito at length left her, with protestations that he would discover his rival, and take vengeance on him for her cruelty and indifference. Angeline entered her convent, hurried into her cell—threw herself on her knees—prayed God to forgive her lover for breaking his vow; and then, overcome with joy at the proof he had given of his constancy, and of the near prospect of their perfect happiness, her head sank on her arms, and she continued absorbed in a reverie which bore the very hues of heaven. It had been a bitter struggle to withstand his entreaties, but her doubts were dissipated, he was true, and at the appointed hour would claim her; and she who had loved through the long year with such fervent, though silent, devotion, would be rewarded! She felt secure—thankful to heaven—happy.—Poor Angeline!

The next day, Faustina came to the convent: the nuns all crowded round her. "Quanto è bellina," cried one. "E tanto carina!" cried another. "S' è fatta la sposina?"—"Are you betrothed yet?" asked a third. Faustina answered with smiles and caresses, and innocent jokes and laughter. The nuns idolized her; and Angeline stood by, admiring her lovely friend, and enjoying the praises lavished on her. At length, Faustina must return; and Angeline, as anticipated, was permitted to accompany her.

"She might go to the villa with her," the Priora said, "but not stay all night—it was against the rules."

Faustina entreated, scolded, coaxed, and at length succeeded in persuading the superior to allow her friend's absence for a single night. They then commenced their return together, attended by a maid servant—a sort of old duenna. As they walked along, a cavalier passed them on horseback.

"How handsome he is!" cried Faustine: "who can he be?"

Angeline blushed deeply, for she saw that it was Ippolito. He passed on swiftly, and was soon out of sight. They were now ascending the hill, the villa almost in sight, when they were alarmed by a bellowing, a hallooing, a shrieking, and a bawling, as if a den of wild beasts, or a madhouse, or rather both together, had broken loose. Faustina turned pale; and soon her companion was equally frightened, for a buffalo, escaped from the yoke, was seen tearing down the hill, filling the air with roarings, and a whole troop of contadini after him, screaming and shrieking—he was exactly in the path of the friends. The old duenna cried out, "O, Gesù Maria!" and fell flat on the earth. Faustina uttered a piercing shriek, and caught Angeline round the waist; who threw herself before the terrified girl, resolved to suffer the danger herself, rather than it should meet her friend—the animal was close upon them. At that moment, the cavalier rode down the hill, passing the buffalo, and then, wheeling round, intrepidly confronted the wild animal. With a ferocious bellow he swerved aside, and turned down a lane that opened to the left; but the horse, frightened, reared, threw his rider, and then galloped down the hill. The cavalier lay motionless, stretched on the earth.

It was now Angeline's turn to scream; and she and Faustina both anxiously ran to their preserver. While the latter fanned him with her large green fan, which Italian ladies carry to make use of as a parasol, Angeline hurried to fetch some water. In a minute or two, colour revisited his cheeks, and he opened his eyes; he saw the beautiful Faustina, and tried to rise. An-

geline at this moment arrived, and presenting the water in a bit of gourd, put it to his lips—he pressed her hand—she drew it away. By this time, old Caterina, finding all quiet, began to look about her, and seeing only the two girls hovering over a fallen man, rose and drew near.

"You are dying!" cried Faustina: "you have saved my life, and are killed yourself."

Ippolito tried to smile. "I am not dying," he said, "but I am hurt."

"Where? how?" cried Angeline. "Dear Faustina, let us send for a carriage for him, and take him to the villa."

"O! yes," said Faustina: "go, Caterina—run—tell papa what has happened—that a young cavalier has killed himself in saving my life."

"Not killed myself," interrupted Ippolito; "only broken my arm, and, I almost fear, my leg."

Angeline grew deadly pale, and sank on the ground.

"And you will die before we get help," said Faustina; "that stupid Caterina crawls like a snail."

"I will go to the villa," cried Angeline, "Caterina shall stay with you and Ip—— Buon dio! what am I saying?"

She rushed away, and left Faustina fanning her lover, who again grew very faint. The villa was soon alarmed, the Signor Conte sent off for a surgeon, and caused a mattress to be slung, with four men to carry it, and came to the assistance of Ippolito. Angeline remained in the house; she yielded at last to her agitation, and wept bitterly, from the effects of fright and grief. "O that he should break his vow thus to be punished—would that the atonement had fallen upon me!" Soon she roused herself, however, prepared the bed, sought what bandages she thought might be necessary, and by that time he had been brought in. Soon after the surgeon came; he found that the left arm was certainly broken, but the leg was only bruised: he

then set the limb, bled him, and giving him a composing draught, ordered that he should be kept very quiet. Angeline watched by him all night, but he slept soundly, and was not aware of her presence. Never had she loved him so. His misfortune, which was accidental, she took as a tribute of his affection, and gazed on his handsome countenance, composed in sleep, thinking, "Heaven preserve the truest lover that ever blessed a maiden's vows!"

The next morning Ippolito woke without fever and in good spirits. The contusion on his leg was almost nothing; he wanted to rise: the surgeon visited him, and implored him to remain quiet only a day or two to prevent fever, and promised a speedy cure if he would implicitly obey his mandates. Angeline spent the day at the villa, but would not see him again. Faustina talked incessantly of his courage, his gallantry, his engaging manners. She was the heroine of the story. It was for her that the cavalier had risked his life; her he had saved. Angeline smiled a little at her egotism. "It would mortify her if I told her the truth," she thought: so she remained silent. In the evening it was necessary to return to the convent; should she go in and say adieu to Ippolito? Was it right? Was it not breaking her vow? Still how could she resist? She entered and approached him softly; he heard her step, and looked up eagerly, and then seemed a little disappointed.

"Adieu! Ippolito," said Angeline, "I must go back to my convent. If you should become worse, which heaven forbid, I will return to wait on you, nurse you, die with you; if you get well, as with God's blessing there seems every hope, in one short month, I will thank you as you deserve. Adieu! dear Ippolito."

"Adieu! dear Angeline; you mean all that is right, and your conscience approves you: do not fear for me. I feel health and strength in my frame, and I bless the inconvenience and pain I suffer since you and your sweet friend are safe. Adieu! Yet,

Angeline, one word:—my father, I hear, took Camilla back to Bologna with him last year—perhaps you correspond?"

"You mistake; by the Marchese's desire, no letters have passed."

"And you have obeyed in friendship as in love—you are very good. Now I ask a promise also—will you keep one to me as well as to my father?"

"If it be nothing against our vow."

"Our vow! you little nun—are our vows so mighty?—No, nothing against our vow; only that you will not write to Camilla nor my father, nor let this accident be known to them; it would occasion anxiety to no purpose:—will you promise?"

"I will promise not to write without your permission."

"And I rely on your keeping your word as you have your vow. Adieu, Angeline. What! go without one kiss?"

She ran out of the room, not to be tempted; for compliance with this request would have been a worse infringement of her engagement than any she had yet perpetrated.

She returned to Este, anxious, yet happy; secure in her lover's faith, and praying fervently that he might speedily recover. For several days after, she regularly went to Villa Moncenigo to ask after him, and heard that he was getting progressively well, and at last she was informed that he was permitted to leave his room. Faustina told her this, her eyes sparkling with delight. She talked a great deal of her cavalier, as she called him, and her gratitude and admiration. Each day, accompanied by her father, she had visited him, and she had always some new tale to repeat of his wit, his elegance, and his agreeable compliments. Now he was able to join them in the saloon, she was doubly happy. Angeline, after receiving this information, abstained from her daily visit, since it could no longer be paid without subjecting her to the risk of encountering her lover. She sent each day, and heard of his recovery; and

each day she received messages from her friend, inviting her to come. But she was firm—she felt that she was doing right; and though she feared that he was angry, she knew that in less than a fortnight, to such had the month decreased since she first saw him, she could display her real sentiments, and as he loved her, he would readily forgive. Her heart was light, or full only of gratitude and happiness.

Each day, Faustina entreated her to come, and her entreaties became more urgent, while still Angeline excused herself. One morning her young friend rushed into her cell to reproach, and question, and wonder at her absence. Angeline was obliged to promise to go; and then she asked about the cavalier, to discover how she might so time her visit, as to avoid seeing him. Faustina blushed—a charming confusion overspread her face as she cried,

"O, Angeline! it is for his sake I wish you to come."

Angeline blushed now in her turn, fearing that her secret was betrayed, and asked hastily,

"What has he said?"

"Nothing," replied her vivacious friend; "and that is why I need you. O Angeline, yesterday, papa asked me how I liked him, and added that if his father consented, he saw no reason why we should not marry—Nor do I—and yet, does he love me? O, if he does not love me, I would not marry him for the world!" and tears sprung into the sensitive girl's eyes, and she threw herself into Angeline's arms.

"Poor Faustina," thought Angeline, "are you to suffer through me?" and she caressed and kissed her with soothing fondness. Faustina continued. She felt sure, she said, that Ippolito did love her. The name fell startlingly on Angeline's ear, thus pronounced by another; and she turned pale and trembled, while she struggled not to betray herself. The tokens of love he gave were not much, yet he looked so happy when she

came in, and pressed her so often to remain—and then his eyes— "Does he ever ask anything about me?" said Angeline.

"No—why should he?" replied Faustina.

"He saved my life," the other answered, blushing.

"Did he—when?—O, I remember; I only thought of mine; to be sure, your danger was as great—nay, greater, for you threw yourself before me. My own dearest friend, I am not ungrateful, though Ippolito renders me forgetful."

All this surprised, nay, stunned Angeline. She did not doubt her lover's fidelity, but she feared for her friend's happiness, and every idea gave way to that—She promised to pay her visit, that very evening.

And now, see her again walking slowly up the hill, with a heavy heart on Faustina's account, and hoping that her love, sudden and unreturned, would not involve her future happiness. At the turn of the road near the villa, her name was called, and she looked up, and again bending from the balustrade, she saw the smiling face of her pretty friend; and Ippolito beside her. He started and drew back as he met her eyes. Angeline had come with a resolve to put him on his guard, and was reflecting how she could speak so as not to compromise her friend. It was labour lost; Ippolito was gone when she entered the saloon, and did not appear again. "He would keep his vow," thought Angeline; but she was cruelly disturbed on her friend's account, and she knew not what to do. Faustina could only talk of her cavalier. Angeline felt conscience-stricken; and totally at loss how to act. Should she reveal her situation to her friend? That, perhaps, were best, and yet she felt it most difficult of all; besides, sometimes she almost suspected that Ippolito had become unfaithful. The thought came with a spasm of agony, and went again; still it unhinged her, and she was unable to command her voice. She returned to her convent, more unquiet, more distressed than ever.

Twice she visited the villa, and still Ippolito avoided her, and Faustina's account of his behaviour to her, grew more inexplicable. Again and again, the fear that she had lost him, made her sick at heart; and again she re-assured herself that his avoidance and silence towards her resulted from his vow, and that his mysterious conduct towards Faustina existed only in the lively girl's imagination. She meditated continually on the part she ought to take, while appetite and sleep failed her; at length she grew too ill to visit the villa, and for two days, was confined to her bed. During the feverish hours that now passed, unable to move, and miserable at the thought of Faustina's fate, she came to a resolve to write to Ippolito. He would not see her, so she had no other means of communication. Her vow forbade the act; but that was already broken in so many ways; and now she acted without a thought of self; for her dear friend's sake only. But, then, if her letter should get into the hands of others; if Ippolito meant to desert her for Faustina?—then her secret should be buried for ever in her own heart. She therefore resolved to write so that her letter would not betray her to a third person. It was a task of difficulty. At last it was accomplished.

"The signor cavaliere would excuse her, she hoped. She was —she had ever been as a mother to the Signorina Faustina—she loved her more than her life. The signor cavaliere was acting, perhaps, a thoughtless part—Did he understand?—and though he meant nothing, the world would conjecture. All she asked was, for his permission to write to his father, that this state of mystery and uncertainty might end as speedily as possible." She tore ten notes—was dissatisfied with this, yet sealed it, and crawling out of her bed, immediately despatched it by the post.

This decisive act calmed her mind, and her health felt the benefit. The next day, she was so well that she resolved to go

up to the villa, to discover what effect her letter had created. With a beating heart she ascended the lane, and at the accustomed turn looked up. No Faustina was watching. That was not strange, since she was not expected; and yet, she knew not why, she felt miserable: tears started into her eyes. "If I could only see Ippolito for one minute—obtain the slightest explanation, all would be well!"

Thinking thus, she arrived at the villa, and entered the saloon. She heard quick steps, as of some one retreating as she came in. Faustina was seated at a table reading a letter—her cheeks flushed, her bosom heaving with agitation. Ippolito's hat and cloak were near her, and betrayed that he had just left the room in haste. She turned—she saw Angeline—her eyes flashed fire—she threw the letter she had been reading at her friend's feet; Angeline saw that it was her own.

"Take it!" said Faustina: "it is yours. Why you wrote it—what it means—I do not ask; it was at least indelicate, and, I assure you, useless—I am not one to give my heart unasked, nor to be refused when proposed by my father. Take up your letter, Angeline. O, I could not believe that you would have acted thus by me!"

Angeline stood as if listening, but she heard not a word; she was motionless—her hands clasped, her eyes swimming with tears, fixed on her letter.

"Take it up, I say," said Faustina, impatiently stamping with her little foot; "it came too late, whatever your meaning was. Ippolito has written to his father for his consent to marry me; my father has written also."

Angeline now started and gazed wildly on her friend.

"It is true! Do you doubt—shall I call Ippolito to confirm my words?"

Faustina spoke exultingly. Angeline struck—terrified—hastily took up the letter, and without a word turned away, left

the saloon—the house, descended the hill, and returned to her convent. Her heart bursting, on fire, she felt as if her frame was possessed of a spirit not her own: she shed no tears, but her eyes were starting from her head—convulsive spasms shook her limbs; she rushed into her cell—threw herself on the floor, and then she could weep—and after torrents of tears, she could pray, and then—think again her dream of happiness was ended for ever, and wish for death.

The next morning, she opened her unwilling eyes to the light, and rose. It was day; and all must rise to live through the day, and she among the rest, though the sun shone not for her as before, and misery converted life into torture. Soon she was startled by the intelligence that a cavalier was in the parlour desirous of seeing her. She shrunk gloomily within herself, and refused to go down. The portress returned a quarter of an hour after. He was gone, but had written to her; and she delivered the letter. It lay on the table before Angeline—she cared not to open it—all was over, and needed not this confirmation. At length, slowly, and with an effort, she broke the seal. The date was the anniversary of the expiration of the year. Her tears burst forth; and then a cruel hope was born in her heart that all was a dream, and that now, the Trial of Love being at an end, he had written to claim her. Instigated by this deceitful suggestion, she wiped her eyes, and read these words.

"I am come to excuse myself from an act of baseness. You refuse to see me, and I write; for, unworthy as I must ever be in your eyes, I would not appear worse than I am. I received your letter in Faustina's presence—she recognized your handwriting. You know her wilfulness, her impetuosity; she took it from me, and I could not prevent her. I will say no more. You must hate me; yet rather afford me your pity, for I am miserable. My honour is now engaged; it was all done almost before I knew the danger—but there is no help—I shall know no

peace till you forgive me, and yet I deserve your curse. Faustina is ignorant of our secret. Farewell."

The paper dropped from Angeline's hand.

It were vain to describe the variety of grief that the poor girl endured. Her piety, her resignation, her noble, generous nature came to her assistance, and supported her when she felt that without them, she must have died. Faustina wrote to say that she would have seen her, but that Ippolito was averse from her doing so. The answer had come from the Marchese della Toretta—a glad consent; but he was ill, and they were all going to Bologna: on their return they would meet.

This departure was some comfort to the unfortunate girl. And soon another came in the shape of a letter from Ippolito's father, full of praises for her conduct. His son had confessed all to him, he said; she was an angel—heaven would reward her, and still greater would be her recompense, if she would deign to forgive her faithless lover. Angeline found relief in anwering this letter, and pouring forth a part of the weight of grief and thought that burthened her. She forgave him freely, and prayed that he and his lovely bride might enjoy every blessing.

Ippolito and Faustina were married, and spent two or three years in Paris and the south of Italy. She had been ecstatically happy at first; but soon the rough world, and her husband's light, inconstant nature, inflicted a thousand wounds in her young bosom. She longed for the friendship, the kind sympathy of Angeline; to repose her head on her soft heart, and to be comforted. She proposed a visit to Venice—Ippolito consented —and they visited Este in their way. Angeline had taken the veil in the convent of Sant'Anna. She was cheerful, if not happy: she listened in astonishment to Faustina's sorrows, and strove to console her. Ippolito, also, she saw with calm and altered feelings; he was not the being her soul had loved; and if she had married him, with her deep feelings, and exalted ideas of

honour, she felt that she should have been even more dissatisfied than Faustina.

The couple lived the usual life of Italian husband and wife. He was gay, inconstant, careless; she consoled herself with a cavaliere servente. Angeline, dedicated to heaven, wondered at all these things; and how, any could so easily make transfer of affections, which with her, were sacred and immutable.

# The Pole

*By the author of "Frankenstein" [sic]*

[Claire Clairmont]

From *The English Annual*, 1836

# Claire Clairmont

Clara Mary Jane Clairmont (1798-1879) *is completely unknown as an author, nothing ever having been published under her name; but as the half-sister*[30] *of Mary Shelley and mother of Byron's daughter Allegra, she is known to everyone who has followed the careers of the romantic poets. Hers was a tempestuous youth; caught in the swirl of genius—Shelley, Byron, Trelawny—she was carried out beyond her depth and never again felt the solid earth under her feet, trailing off into a life of bleak spinsterhood under the double burden of a regrettable past and a hopeless future.*

*"The Pole" has three times appeared in print, always as "by the author of* Frankenstein." *In another place*[31] *I am explaining fully why the story should be credited to Claire Clairmont, not Mary Shelley. Suffice it here to say that Mary supplied only the conclusion and a certain amount of editorial revision. The result is most happy. Claire could write. One need only read her letters to recognize a lively imagination and a sharp wit. Here she has conjured up a compelling story (marred somewhat by Mary's melodramatic conclusion), and given it sparkle with vigorous action and deft description.*

# The Pole

IT WAS IN the early part of February of the year 1831, near the close of day, that a travelling calèche, coming from Rome, was seen approaching, at full gallop, towards Mola di Gaeta. The road leading to the inn is rocky and narrow; on one side is an orange grove, extending to the sea; on the other an old Roman wall, overgrown by blossoming shrubs, enormous aloes, floating tangles of vines, and a thousand species of parasite plants peculiar to the South. Scarcely had the calèche entered this defile, when the careless postilion drove one of the wheels over a protruding ledge of rock, and overturned it; and in the next moment, a crowd of people came running to the spot. Not one of them, however, thought of relieving the traveller within the fallen vehicle; but with violent gestures and loud outcries, began to examine what damage the calèche had sustained, and what profit they might derive from it. The wheelwright declared every wheel was shattered; the carpenter that the shafts were splintered; whilst the blacksmith, passing and repassing under the carriage, tugged at every clamp and screw and nail, with all the violence necessary to ensure himself a handsome job. The traveller it contained having quietly disengaged himself from various cloaks, books, and maps, now slowly descended, and for a moment the busy crowd forgot their restlessness, to gaze with admiration upon the noble figure of the stranger. He seemed to be scarcely two-and-twenty. In stature he was sufficiently tall to give an idea of superiority to his fellow mortals; and his form was moulded in such perfect proportions, that it presented a rare combination of youthful lightness and manly strength.

His countenance, had you taken from it its deep thoughtfulness and its expression of calm intrepid bravery, might have belonged to the most lovely woman, so transparently blooming was his complexion, so regular his features, so blond and luxuriant his hair. Of all those present, he seemed the least concerned at the accident; he neither looked at the calèche, nor paid any attention to the offers of service that were screamed from a dozen mouths; but, drawing out his watch, asked his servant if the carriage was broken.

"Pann,* the shafts are snapt, two of the springs are injured, and the linch-pin has flown."

"How long will it take to repair them?"

"Twenty-four hours."

"It is now four o'clock. See that every thing be in order again by to-morrow's daybreak."

"Pann, with these lazy Italians, I fear it will be impossible."

"Ya paswalam,"† replied the traveller, coldly, but decidedly. "Pay double—triple—what you will, but let all be ready for the hour I have mentioned."

Without another word, he walked towards the inn, followed by the crowd, teazing for alms. A few seconds ago they had all been active and healthy beings, so full of employment they could not afford to mend his calèche unless tempted by some extraordinary reward: now the men declared themselves cripples and invalids, the children were orphans, the women helpless widows, and they would all die of hunger if his Eccellenza did not bestow a few grani. "What a tedious race!" exclaimed the traveller, casting a handful of coins upon the ground, which caused a general scramble, and enabled him to proceed unmolested. At the inn new torments awaited him; a fresh crowd, composed of the landlord, the landlady, and their waiters and hostlers, gathered round, and assailed him with innumerable questions. The landlord hoped none of his limbs were broken,

* My Lord, in Polish. † I will it, in Polish.

and begged him to consider himself master of the house; the waiters desired to know at what hour he would sup, what fare he chose, how long he intended to stay, where he came from, whither he was going; and the landlady led him, ostentatiously, through all the rooms of the inn, expatiating endlessly upon the peculiar and indescribable advantages of each. Ineffably weary of their officiousness, the traveller at last traversed a long and spacious hall, and took refuge in a balcony that looked upon the bay of Gaeta.

The inn is built upon the site of Cicero's Villa. Beneath the balcony, and on each side, along the whole curve of the bay, stretched a thick grove of orange-trees, which sloped down to the very verge of the Mediterranean. Balls of golden fruit, and blossoms faint with odour, and fair as stars, studded this amphitheatre of dark foliage; and at its extremity the liquid light of the waves pierced the glossy leaves, mingling their blue splendour with earth's green paradise. Every rock and mountain glowed with a purple hue, so intense and soft, they resembled violet vapours dissolving into the pale radiance of the evening sky. Far away in the deep broad flood of the ocean, rose the two mountain islands of Ischia and Procida, between which Vesuvius thrust in his jagged form, and his floating banner of snow-white smoke. The solitary heaven was without sun or moon, without a star or cloud, but smiled in that tender vestal light which speaks of eternal, immutable peace.

It would be difficult to define the feelings of the traveller as he gazed on this scene: his countenance, uplifted to heaven, was animated with a profound and impassioned melancholy, with an expression of an earnest and fervid pleading against some vast and inevitable wrong. He was thinking probably of his country; and whilst he contrasted its ruined villages and devastated fields with the splendour and glow of the fair land before him, was breathing inwardly a passionate appeal against

that blind and cruel destiny which had consigned Poland to the desolating influence of Russian despotism. His reverie was interrupted by the sound of a female voice singing in Polish among the orange trees at his feet. The singer was invisible; but the sweetness of her voice, and the singular reference of the words (the following prose translation conveys their meaning) to the thoughts of his own mind, filled the traveller with surprise:—

"When thou gazest upon the azure heaven, so mighty in its calm, do not say, O bright enchantment, hast thou no pity, that thou dawnest thus in unattainable loveliness upon my world-wearied eyes.

"When the southern wind softly breathes, do not say reproachfully, Thy cradle is the ether of the morning sun, thou drinkest the odorous essence of myrtle and lemon blossoms; thou should'st bear upon thy wings all sweet emotions, all soft desires; why bringest thou then no healing to the anguish I endure?

"Neither in the dark hour, when thou thinkest upon thy country and thy friends, say not with grief, They are lost! They are not! Say rather with joy, They were illustrious! and it is bliss to know that they have been!"

It were wise in me to obey thy lesson, sweet songstress, thought the traveller; and, revolving in his mind the singularity of the serenade, he continued to gaze upon the trees below: there was no rustling amid their branches, no sound which told a human being was concealed beneath their foliage; nothing was heard beyond the almost imperceptible breathings of the evening air. Did such things exist any where but in the imagination of the poet? He could almost have believed that the spirit of that divine scene had assumed a human voice and human words, to soothe his melancholy, so floating and airy had been the strain, so deep the silence that succeeded it. One moment more, and there arose from the same spot cries for help uttered

in Italian, and shrieks of distress so piercing, they made the traveller fly with the speed of lightning through the great hall, down the staircase into the garden. The first object that met his eyes was the figure of a girl about sixteen, her one arm tightly embracing the stem of a tree, her other angrily repelling a young man who was endeavouring to drag her away. "I will not go with you—I love you no longer, Giorgio—and go with you, I will not," shrieked the girl, in tones of mingled violence and fear. "You must—you shall," retorted her aggressor, in a voice of thunder. "I have found you again, and I won't be duped by your fooleries, Marietta. . . . . And who are you, and who begged you to interfere?" added he, turning fiercely upon the traveller, whose strong grasp had torn him from Marietta. "An officer, as it should seem by your dress;—be pleased to know that I am also an officer, and risk my displeasure no further."

"No officer would ill-treat a defenceless girl," the Pole replied, with quiet contempt.

At this taunt Giorgio quivered with rage. His features, handsome and regular as those of Italians generally are, became quite distorted. His hands with convulsive movements sought about his breast for the dagger that was concealed there, his dark flashing eyes fixed intently at the same time upon his adversary, as if he hoped the fiendish spirit that burned within them might previously annihilate him.

"Be on your guard—he is a perfect wretch," cried Marietta, rushing towards her protector.

The arrival of several servants from the inn dispelled all idea of present danger: they dragged off Giorgio, telling him that, although the girl was his sister, he had no right to separate her from the *corps d'opéra*, with whom she was travelling through Gaeta.

"*È vero, è verissimo,*" cried Marietta with joyful triumph.

What is it to him if I like my liberty, and prefer wandering about, singing here and there, to being his unhappy par——"

"Marietta! beware! dare not to speak ill of me!" screamed the retiring Giorgio, looking back over his shoulder, and accompanying his words with a look of such frightful menace, as completely subdued his sister.

She watched in anxious silence till he had disappeared, and then, with affectionate humility and a graceful quickness that allowed not of its prevention, knelt lightly down, and pressed the stranger's hand to her lips. "You have more than repaid me for the song I sang to you," she said, rising and leading the way to the inn, "and, if you like it, I will sing others to you whilst you sup."

"Are you a Pole?" enquired the traveller. "A fine demand! how can I be a Pole? Did you not say yourself there was no longer any such country as Poland?"

"I? not that I recollect."

"If you did not say it, confess at least that you thought it. The Poles are all become Russians, and for nothing in the world, Signor, would I be a Russian. Why, in all their language they have no word that expresses *honour*.* No! rather than be a Russian, much as I hate it, I would go with Giorgio."

"Are you an Italian?"

"No—not exactly."

"What are you, then?"

"Um! I am what I am, who can be more? But, Signor, one thing I must beg of you, do not ask me any questions about myself, nor any about Giorgio. I will sing to you, talk to you, wait upon you—any thing of that kind you please, but I will not answer questions on those subjects."

Seating herself upon a stool, in a dark corner of the traveller's apartment, as far removed as possible from him, and all other interruptions, Marietta passed the evening in playing on her

* This is true. The Russian language is without that word.

guitar and singing. She was a most accomplished singer, possessing and managing all the intricacies of the art, with perfect ease, but this scarcely excited admiration in comparison with the natural beauty of her voice. There was a profound melancholy in its intense sweetness, that dissolved the soul of the traveller in grief. All that was dear to him in the memory of the past, the joys of home, and childhood, the tenderness and truth of his first friendships, the glow of patriotism; every cherished hour, every endeared spot, all that he had loved, and all that he had lost upon earth, seemed again to live and again to fade, as he listened to her strains. Without paying any attention to him, and apparently without any effort to herself, she breathed forth melody after melody for her own pleasure, like some lone nightingale, that, in a home of green leaves, sings to cheer its solitude with sweet sounds. Her countenance and figure would have been beautiful, had they been more fully developed. They resembled those sketches of a great artist in which there are only a few lightly-traced lines, but those are so full of spirit and meaning, that you easily imagine what a masterpiece it would have been when finished.

The first visit of our traveller, on arriving, next day, at Naples, was to the Princess Dashkhoff. She was a Russian lady, whose high birth, immense wealth, and talents for intrigue, had procured for her the intimacy of half the crowned heads of Europe, and had made her all powerful at the Court of St. Petersburgh. Detesting the cold barbarism of her native country, she had established herself at Naples, in a splendid mansion, near the Strada Nuova; and affecting an extravagant admiration for Italy, by her munificent patronage of the arts and artists, and by perpetual exhibitions of her own skill, in drawing and singing, dancing and acting, had obtained the name of the Corinna of the North. Her *salon* was the evening resort of the wise, the idle, the witty, and the dissipated. Not to know

Corinna, was to be yourself unknown; and not to frequent her conversazioni was, as far as society was concerned, to be banished from all that was fashionable or delightful in Naples.

It was the hour of evening reception. The Pole burned with impatience to speak to the Princess, for on her influence, at Petersburgh, depended the fate of a brother, the only being in existence he now cared for. A splendid suite of apartments, blazing with lights, crowded with company, and furnished with the munificence of an Eastern harem, lay open before him; without allowing himself to be announced he entered them. When an highly imaginative mind is absorbed by some master feeling, all opposing contrasts, all glowing extremes, serve but to add depth and intensity to that feeling. The festal scene of marble columns garlanded by roses, the walls of Venetian mirrors, reflecting the light of innumerable tapers, and the forms of lovely women and gay youths floating in the mazy dance, seemed to him deceitful shows that veiled some frightful sorrow; and with eager rapid steps, as if borne along by the impulse of his own thoughts, he hurried past them. Scarcely knowing how he had arrived there, he at length found himself standing beside the Princess, in a marble colonnade, open above to the moonlight and the stars of heaven, and admitting at its sides the odorous air and blossoming almond-trees of the adjacent garden.

"Ladislas!" exclaimed the lady, starting, "is it possible—to see you here almost exceeds belief."

After remaining some moments in deep silence, collecting and arranging his thoughts, the Pole replied. A conversation ensued, in so low a voice as to be only audible to themselves; from their attitudes and gestures it might be inferred that Ladislas was relating some tale of deep anguish, mixed with solemn and impressive adjurations to which the Princess listened with a consenting tranquillizing sympathy.

They issued from the recess, walked up the colonnade, and entered a small temple that terminated it. From the centre of its airy dome hung a lighted alabaster lamp of a boat-like shape, beneath which a youthful female was seated alone sketching a range of moonlight hills that appeared between the columns. "Idalie," said the Princess, "I have brought you a new subject for your pencil—and such a subject, my love—one whose fame has already made him dear to your imagination; no less a person than the hero of Ostralenka,* the Vistula, and the Belvedere.† So call up one of those brightest, happiest moods of your genius, in which all succeeds to you, and enrich my album with his likeness," spreading it before her.

It is difficult to refuse any request to a person who has just granted us an important favour. Ladislas suffered himself to be seated, and as soon as the Princess had quitted them, the gloom which had shadowed his brow at the names of Ostralenka, the Vistula, and the Belvedere, vanished. The surpassing beauty of the young artist would have changed the heaviest penance into a pleasure. She was lovely as one of Raphael's Madonnas; and, like them, there was a silent beauty in her presence that struck the most superficial beholder with astonishment and satisfaction. Her hair, of a golden and burnished brown, (the colour of the autumnal foliage illuminated by the setting sun,) fell in gauzy wavings round her face, throat and shoulders. Her small clear forehead, gleaming with gentle

* At Ostralenka, the Russian and Polish armies were in sight of one another. The destruction of the Poles seemed inevitable; not expecting the attack, their lines were not formed, and the Russians were triple in number, and advancing in the most perfect order. In this emergency, three hundred students from the University of Warsaw drew hastily up in a body, and, devoting themselves willingly to death, marched forward to meet the onset of the enemy. They were headed by a young man who distinguished himself by the most exalted courage, and was the only one of their numbers who escaped. He stationed his band in a small wood that lay directly in the path of the Russians, and checked their progress for the space of three hours. Every tree of that wood now waves above a patriot's grave. In the meantime the Polish army formed, bore down, and gained a most brilliant victory.

† The palace at Warsaw, in which the attempt to assassinate the Grand Duke Constantine was made by a party of young men.

thought; her curved, soft, and rosy lips; the delicate moulding of the lower part of the face, expressing purity and integrity of nature, were all perfectly Grecian. Her hazel eyes, with their arched lids and dark arrowy lashes, pierced the soul with their full and thrilling softness. She was clad in long and graceful drapery, white as snow; but, pure as this garment was, it seemed a rude disguise to the resplendent softness of the limbs it enfolded. The delicate light that gleamed from the alabaster lamp above them was a faint simile of the ineffable spirit of love that burned within Idalie's fair transparent frame; and the one trembling shining star of evening that palpitates responsively to happy lovers, never seemed more divine or more beloved than she did to Ladislas, as she sat there, now fixing a timid but attentive gaze upon his countenance, and then dropping it upon the paper before her. And not alone for Ladislas, was this hour the dawn of passionate love. The same spell was felt in the heart of Idalie, veiling the world and lifting her spirit into vast and immeasurable regions of unexplored delight. One moment their eyes met and glanced upon each other, the look of exalted, of eternal love, mute, blessed, and inexpressible. Their lids fell and were raised no more. Rapture thrilled their breasts and swelled their full hearts, a rapture felt but not seen; for motionless, and in deep silence, as if every outward faculty were absorbed in reverence, they continued, each inwardly knowing, hearing, seeing nothing but the divine influence and attraction of the other.

I know not if the portrait was finished. I believe it was not. Noiselessly Idalie arose and departed to seek the Princess, and Ladislas followed. "Who is that lovely being?" enquired an English traveller sometime afterward, pointing out Idalie from a group of ladies. "A Polish girl—a protégée of mine," was the reply of the Princess; "a daughter of one of Kosciusko's unfortunate followers, who died here poor and unknown. She has

a great genius for drawing and painting, but she is so different in her nature from the generality of people, that I am afraid she will never get on in the world. All the family are wild and strange. There is a brother, who they say is a complete ruffian; brave as a Pole and unprincipled as an Italian; a villain quite varnished in picturesque, like one of your Lord Byron's corsairs and giaours. Then there is a younger sister; the most uncontrollable little creature, who chose to pretend my house was insupportable, and ran away into Calabria or Campagna, and set up as a *prima donna*. But these, to be sure, are the children of a second wife, an Italian; and Idalie, I must confess, has none of their lawlessness, but is remarkably gentle and steady."

Disgusted with this heartless conversation, which disturbed his mood of exstacy, Ladislas hastily quitted the Dashkhoff palace, and entered the Villa Reale, whose embowering trees promised solitude. Not one straggler of the many gay crowds that frequent this luxurious garden from morning till midnight was now to be seen. With its straight walks buried in gloom and shadow; its stone fonts of sleeping water; its marble statues, its heaven-pointing obelisks, and the tingling silence of its midnight air, it was holy and calm as a deserted oratory, when the last strain of the vesper hymn has died away, the last taper has ceased to burn, the last censer has been flung, and both priests and worshippers have departed. Ladislas cast himself upon a stone-seat in the ilex-grove that skirts the margin of the bay. "I dreamt not of love," he exclaimed, "I sought her not! I had renounced life and all its train of raptures, hopes, and joys. Cold, and void of every wish, the shadow of death lay upon my heart; suddenly she stood before me, lovely as an angel that heralds departed spirits to the kingdom of eternal bliss. Fearless, but mild, she poured the magic of her gaze upon my soul. I speak the word of the hour. She shall be mine—or I will die!"

Reclining in the ilex-grove, Ladislas passed the remaining hours of that too-short night, entranced in bliss, as if the bright form of his beloved were still shining beside him. Gradually, every beauty of the wondrous and far-famed Bay of Naples impressed itself upon his attention. The broad and beamless moon sinking behind the tall elms of Posylippo—the broken starlight on the surface of the waves—their rippling sound as they broke at his feet—Sorrento's purple promontory, and the gentle wind that blew from it—the solitary grandeur of Capri's mountain-island, rising out of the middle of the bay, a colossal sphinx guarding two baths of azure light—Vesuvius breathing its smoke, and flame, and sparks, into the cloudless ether—all became mingled in inexplicable harmony with his new-born passion, and were indelibly associated with his recollection of that night.

The next morning Idalie was sketching in the Villa Reale. She had seated herself on the outside of a shady alley. Two persons passed behind her, and the childish, petulant voice of one of them drew her attention. That voice, so sweet even in its impatience, certainly belonged to her fugitive sister. "It is she!" exclaimed Idalie, gliding swift as thought between the trees, and folding the speaker to her bosom. "Marietta,—my dear little Marietta! at last you are come back again. *Cattivella!* now promise to stay with me. You know not how miserable I have been about you."

"No! I cannot promise anything of the kind," replied Marietta, playing with the ribbons of her guitar. "I choose to have my liberty."

Idalie's arms sunk, and her eyes were cast upon the ground when she heard the cold and decided tone in which this refusal was pronounced. On raising the latter, they glanced upon the companion of her sister, and were filled with unconquerable emotion at discovering Ladislas, the elected of her heart.

"I met your sister here a few minutes ago," explained he, partaking her feelings; "and having been so fortunate the other day as to render her a slight service——"

"Oh, yes," interrupted Marietta; "I sung for him a whole evening at Gaeta. It was a curious adventure. His carriage was overturned close to the inn. I had arrived there half an hour before, and was walking in an orange-grove near the spot, and saw the accident happen, and heard him speak in Polish to his servant. My heart beat with joy to behold one belonging to that heroic nation. He looked wondrous melancholy: I thought it must be about his country, so I crept as softly as a mouse among the trees under his balcony, and sung him a slave-song in Polish. I *improvised* it on the spur of the moment. I do not very well recollect it, but it was about azure heavens, southern winds, myrtle and lemon blossoms, and the illustrious unfortunate; and it ought to have pleased him. Just as I had finished, out starts our blessed brother, Giorgio, from the inn, and began one of his most terrific bothers. Imagine how frightened I was, for I thought he was gone to Sicily with his regiment. However, they got him away, and I followed this stranger into his room, and sang to him the rest of the evening. All my best songs, the *Mio ben quando verrà, Nina pazza per Amore*, the *All' armi!* of Generali, the *Dolce cara patria* from Tancredi, the *Deh! calma* from Otello,—all my whole stock, I assure you." Thus rattled on Marietta; and then, as if her quick eye had already discovered the secret of their attachment, she added, with an arch smile, "But don't be frightened, Idalie, though his eyes filled with tears whilst I sung, as your's often do, not a word of praise did the Sarmatian bestow on me."

"Then return and live with me, dear Marietta, and I will praise you as much, and more than you desire."

"*Santa Maria del Piè di Grotta*! What a tiresome person you are, Idalie. When you have got an idea into your head, an

earthquake would not get it out again. Have I not told you that I will not? If you knew the motive, you would approve my resolution. I said I liked my liberty, and so forth, but that was not the reason of my flight. I do not choose to have any thing to do with Giorgio and the Princess; for, believe me, dearest Idalie, disgraceful as my present mode of life seems to you, it is innocence itself compared with the crimes they were leading me into."

"Some suspicion of this did once cross my mind," her sister replied with a sigh, "but I rejected it as too horrible. Dear child, think no more about them. Do you not know that I have left the Princess' house, and am living by myself in a little pavilion far up on the Strada Nuova? There you need not fear their molestations."

"Is not Giorgio, then, with you?"

"No, I have not seen him for some time. I doubt if he be in Naples."

"So, Messer Giorgio, you have deceived me again. But I might have known that, for he never speaks a word of truth. Be assured, however, he is in Naples, for I caught a glimpse of him this morning, mounting the hill that leads to the barracks at Pizzofalcone, and he is as intimate with the Princess as ever, though she pretends to disown him. As for me, I am engaged at San Carlos; the writing is signed and sealed, and cannot be broken without forfeiting a heavy sum of money; otherwise I should be happy to live peacefully with you; for you know not, Idalie, all I have had to suffer; how sad and ill-treated I have been! how often pinched with want and hunger; and worse than that, when Giorgio takes it into his head to pursue me, and plants himself in the pit, fixing his horrible looks upon me as I sing! how many times I have rushed out of the theatre, and spent the nights in the great wide Maremma, beset by robbers, buffaloes, and wild boars, till I was almost mad with fear and

bewilderment. There is a curse upon our family, I think. Did not our father once live in a splendid castle of his own, with an hundred retainers to wait upon him; and do you remember the miserable garret in which he died? But I cannot stay any longer. I am wanted at the rehearsal: so, farewell, dearest Idalie. Be you at least happy, and leave me to fulfil the evil destiny that hangs over our race."

"No! No!" exclaimed Ladislas, "that must not be—the writing must be cancelled,"—and then, with the affection and unreserve of a brother, he entered into their sentiments; with sweet and persuasive arguments overcame their scruples of receiving a pecuniary obligation from him, and finally, taking Marietta by the hand, led her away to San Carlos, in order to cancel her engagement.

And in another hour it was cancelled. Marietta was once more free and joyful; and, affectionate as old friends, the three met again in the little pavilion, which was Idalie's home. It stood alone in a myrtle wood on the last of the green promontories, which form the Strada Nuova, and separate the Bay of Naples from the Bay of Baia,—a lonely hermitage secluded from the noise and turmoil of the city, whose only visitors were the faint winds of morning and evening, the smiles of the fair Italian heaven, its wandering clouds, and, perchance, a solitary bird. From every part of the building you could see the Baian Ocean sparkling breathlessly beneath the sun; through the windows and the columns of the portico you beheld the mountains of the distant coast shining on, hour after hour, like amethysts in a vapour of purple transparent light, so ardent yet halcyon, so bright and unreal, a poet would have chosen it to emblem the radiant atmosphere that glows around the Elysian isles of eternal peace and joy. Marietta soon left the building to join some fisher boys who were dancing the tarantella upon the beach below. Idalie took her drawing, which was

her daily employment, and furnished her the means of subsistence, and Ladislas sat by her side. There was no sound of rolling carriages, no tramp of men and horse, no distant singing, no one speaking near; the wind awoke no rustling amid the leaves of the myrtle wood, and the wave died without a murmur on the shore. Ladislas' deep but melodious voice alone broke the crystal silence of the noon-day air. Italy was around him, robed in two splendours of blue and green; but he was an exile, and the recollections of his native land thronged into his memory, and oppressed him with their numbers and their life. During the three months it had taken him to effect his escape from Warsaw to Naples, his lips had been closed in silence, whilst his mind had been wrapt in the gloom of the dreadful images that haunted it. In Idalie's countenance there was that expression of innocence and sublimity of soul, of purity and strength, that excited the warmest admiration, and inspired sudden and deep confidence. She looked like some supernatural being that walks through the world, untouched by its corruptions; like one that unconsciously, yet with delight, confers pleasure and peace; and Ladislas felt that, in speaking to her of the dark sorrows of his country, they would lose their mortal weight and be resolved into beauty, by her sympathy. In glowing terms he described the heroic struggle of Poland for liberty; the triumph and exultation that had filled every bosom during the few months they were free; the hardships and privations they had endured, the deeds of daring bravery of the men, the heroism it had awakened in the women; and then its fall—the return of the Russians; the horrible character of Russian despotism, its sternness and deceit, its pride and selfish ignorance: the loss of public and private integrity, the disbelief of good, the blighted, hopeless, joyless life endured by those whom it crushes beneath its servitude.

Thus passed the hours of the forenoon. Then Ladislas, fixing

his eyes upon the coast of Baia, and expressing at the same time his impatience to visit that ancient resort of heroes and of emperors, Idalie led the way by a small path down the hill to the beach. There they found a skiff dancing idly to and fro upon the waves, and, unmooring it from its rocky haven, embarked in it. It had been sweet to mark the passage of that light bark freighted with these happy lovers, when borne by its sails it swept through the little ocean-channel that lies between the beaked promontories of the mainland and the closing cliffs of the island of Nisida; and when with gentler motion it glided into the open expanse of the bay of Baia, and cut its way through the translucent water, above the ruins of temples and palaces overgrown by sea-weed, on which the rays of the sun were playing, creating a thousand rainbow hues, that varied with every wave that flowed over them. In all that plane of blue light it was the only moving thing; and as if it had been the child of the ocean that bore it, and the sun that looked down on it, it sped gaily along in their smiles past the fortress where Brutus and Cassius sought shelter after the death of Caesar; past the temples of Jupiter and Neptune; by the ruins of that castle in which three Romans once portioned out the world between them, to the Cumaean hill that enshadows the beloved Linternum of Scipio Africanus, and in which he died. The whole of this coast is a paradise of natural beauty, investing with its own loveliness the time-eaten wrecks with which it is strewn; the mouldering past is mingled with the vivid present; ruin and grey annihilation are decked in eternal spring. The woody windings of the shore reveal, in their deep recesses, the gleaming marble fragments of the abodes of ancient heroes: the verdurous hues of the promontories mingle with the upright columns of shattered temples, or clothe, with nature's voluptuous bloom, the pale funereal urns of departed gods; whilst the foliage and the inland fountains, and the breaking

waves upon the shore, were murmuring around their woven minstrelsy of love and joy. Earth, sea, and sky, blazed like three gods, with tranquil but animated loveliness; with a splendour that did not dazzle—with a richness that could not satiate. The air on that beautiful warm coast was as a field of fragrance; the refreshing sea-breeze seemed to blow from Paradise, quickening their senses, and bringing to them the odour of a thousand unknown blossoms. "What world is this?" exclaimed Ladislas, in a tone of rapture that nearly answered its own question. "I could imagine I had entered an enchanted garden; four heavens surround me; the one above; the pure element beneath me with its waves that shine and tremble as stars; the adorned earth that hangs over it; and the heaven of delight they create within my breast. 'Morning is here a rose, day a tulip, night a lily; evening is, like morning, again a rose, and life seems a choral-hymn of beautiful and glowing sentiments, that I go singing to myself as I wander along this perpetual path of flowers.'"

It was night ere they again reached the pavilion. It stood dark and deserted in the clear moonshine; the door was locked; the windows and their outer shutters had been closed from within, so securely as to deny all admittance, unless by breaking them open, which the solid nature of the shutters rendered almost impossible. After calling and knocking repeatedly without obtaining any answer, it became evident that Marietta had quitted the dwelling. In the first moment of surprise which this occurrence occasioned, they had not observed a written sheet of paper, of a large size, which lay unfolded and placed directly before the door, as if to attract attention. Idalie took it up and read the following lines, traced by Marietta.

"Oh Idalie! what a fiendish thing is life. But a few hours ago, how calm and secure we were in happiness—now danger and perhaps destruction is our portion. One chance yet remains;

the moment you get this, persuade—not only persuade—but compel that adorable stranger to fly instantly from Naples. He is not safe here an instant longer. Do not doubt what I say, or his life may be the forfeit. How can I impress this on your mind. I would not willingly betray any one, but how else can I save him? Giorgio has been here. Oh! the frightful violence of that man. He raved like an insane person, and let fall such dark and bloody hints as opened worlds of horror to me. I am gone to discover what I can. I know his haunts, and his associates, and shall soon find out if there be any truth in what he threatens. I could not await your return, neither dare I leave the pavilion open. Who knows if, in the interval between my departure and your return, an assassin might not conceal himself within; and your first welcome be, to see the stranger fall lifeless at your feet. His every step is watched by spies armed for his destruction. I know not what to do—and yet it seems to me that my going may possibly avert the catastrophe.—

"MARIETTA."

Ladislas listened to these lines unmoved; but the effect they produced on Idalie was dreadful. She gave implicit credence to them, and every word sounded as a knell. She lost all presence of mind; every reflection that might have taught her to avert the stroke she so much dreaded, was swallowed up in anguish, as if the deed that was to be consummated were already done. What task can be more difficult than to describe the overwhelming agony which heavy and unexpected misery produces. To have lived the day that Idalie had just lived—a day in which all the beauty of existence had been unveiled to its very depths; to have dreamt as she had done, a dream of love that steeped her soul in divine, and almost uncommunicable joy; and now to sink from this pinnacle of happiness into a black and lampless cavern, the habitation of death, whose spectral form and chilling spirit was felt through all the air! This is but

a feeble metaphor of the sudden transition from rapture to misery, which Idalie experienced. She looked upon Ladislas, and beheld him bright and full of life; the roseate hues of health upon his cheek, his eyes beaming with peaceful joy, his noble countenance varying not in the least from that imperturbable and godlike self-possession which was its habitual expression. And as her imagination made present to her the fatal moment, when beneath the dagger of the assassin this adored being should sink bleeding, wounded, and then be ever lost in death, her blood rushed to her heart, a deadly pause ensued, from which she awoke in a bewildering mist of horror. The still air and quiet moonshine to her seemed brooding mischief; a thousand shadows that proceeded from no one, but were the creatures of her distressed brain, flitted around, and filled the empty space of the portico. Poor Idalie! an eternity of bliss would have been dearly bought at the price of that moment's overwhelming anguish! Ladislas beheld her excess of emotion with pain, in which, however, all was not pain, for it was blended with that triumphant exultation, that a lover ever feels when he for the first time becomes assured that he is beloved by the object of his love with an affection tender and intense as his own.

As soon as Idalie recovered some presence of mind, with passionate supplications she entreated Ladislas to leave her, to fly this solitary spot, and to seek safety amid the crowded streets of Naples. He would not hear of this; he gently remonstrated with her upon the unreasonableness of her terrors, urging how little probable it was that his passing *rencontre* with Giorgio at Gaeta could have awakened in him such a deadly spirit of revenge as Marietta represented. He viewed the whole thing lightly, attributing it either to the vivacity of Marietta's imagination, which had made her attach a monstrous import to some angry expressions of her brother, or looking upon it as

some merry device which she had contrived, in order to frighten them; and tranquillized Idalie, by assurances that they would shortly see her wild sister return laughing, and full of glee at the success of her plot. In this expectation two hours passed away, but still no Marietta appeared, and it had grown too late to seek another shelter, without exposing Idalie to the slander of evil-minded people. They passed the rest of the night therefore in the portico, Idalie sometimes pale and breathless, with recurring fears, and sometimes calm and happy, as Ladislas poured forth his tale of passionate love. His feelings on the contrary were pure and unalloyed. Where Idalie was, there was the whole universe to him; where she was not, there was only a formless void. He had an insatiable thirst for her presence, which only grew intenser with the enjoyment of its own desire; and he blessed the fortunate occurrence that prolonged his bliss during hours which otherwise would have been spent pining in absence from her. No other considerations intruded. Blessings kindled within his eyes as he gazed upon that lovely countenance and faultless form, and angels might have envied the happines he felt.

Morning came, bright and serene; the sun arose, the ocean and the mountains again resumed their magic splendour; the myrtle-woods and every minuter bloom of the garden shone out beneath the sun, and the whole earth was a happy form made perfect by the power of light. They recollected that they had promised to join the Princess Dashkhoff, and a large party of her friends, at eight o'clock in an excursion to Poestum. The point of meeting was the shore of the Villa Reale, where the numerous guests were to embark in a steamer which had been engaged for the occasion. In Idalie's present homeless and uncertain condition, this plan offered some advantages. It would enable them to pass the day in each other's society under the auspices of the Princess, and it was to be hoped that on their

return the mystery of Marietta's disappearance would be unravelled, and Idalie find her home once more open to her. They had scarcely settled to go, ere one of those horse calessini which ply in the streets of Naples, was seen coming towards them. Its driver, a ragged boy, sat on the shaft, singing as he drove; another urchin, all in tatters, stood as lacquey behind, and between them sat Marietta; the paleness of fear was on her cheeks, and her eyes had the staggered affrighted look of one who has gazed upon some appalling horror. She hastily descended, and bade the calessino retire to some distance, and await further orders. "Why is he yet here?" said she to her sister. "You foolish blind Idalie, why did you not mind my letter—too proud I suppose to obey any but yourself; but mark, you would not hear my warnings—we shall lose him, and you will feel them in your heart's core." She then, with all the violent gesticulation of an Italian, threw herself at the feet of Ladislas, and with a countenance that expressed her own full conviction in what she said, besought him to fly instantly, not only from Naples, but from Italy, for his life would never be safe in that land of assassins and traitors. With entreaties almost as violent as her own, Ladislas and Idalie urged her to explain, but this only threw her into a new frenzy; she wept and tore her hair; she declared the peril was too urgent to admit of explanation,—every moment was precious—another hour's stay in Naples would be his death.

The situation of Ladislas was a curious one. He had served in the Russian campaigns against Persia and Turkey, and had been there daily exposed to the chances of destruction; in the late struggle between Poland and Russia, he had performed actions of such determined and daring bravery as had made his name a glory to his countrymen, and a terror to their enemies. In all these exploits he had devoted himself so unreservedly to death, that his escape was considered as a miraculous inter-

position of heaven. It was not to be expected that this Mars in a human form, this Achilles who had braved death in a thousand shapes, should now consent to fly before the uplifted finger and visionary warnings of a dream-sick girl, for such Marietta appeared to him to be. He pitied her sufferings, endeavoured to soothe her, but asserted he had seen no reason that could induce him to quit Naples.

A full quarter of an hour elapsed before an explanation could be wrung from Marietta. The chaos that reigned in her mind may easily be imagined. She had become possessed of a secret which involved the life of two persons. Ladislas refused to save himself unless she revealed what might place her brother's life in jeopardy. Whichever way she looked, destruction closed the view. Nature had bestowed on her a heart exquisitely alive to the sufferings of others; a mind quick in perceiving the nicest lines of moral rectitude, and strenuous in endeavouring to act up to its perceptions. Any deviations in her conduct from these principles had been the work of a fate that, strong and fierce as a tempest, had bent down her weak youth like a reed beneath its force. She had once loved Giorgio; he had played with and caressed her in infancy—with the fond patronage of an elder brother had procured her the only indulgences her orphaned childhood had ever known. Fraternal love called loudly on her not to endanger his life; gratitude as loudly called on her not to allow her benefactor to become his victim. This last idea was too horrible to be endured. The present moment is ever all-powerful with the young, and Marietta related what she knew.

Well might the poor child be wild and disordered. She had passed the night in the catacombs of San Gennaro, under Capo di Monte. In these subterranean galleries were held the nightly meetings of the band of desperate *bravi* of whom Giorgio was in secret the chief. The entrance to the catacombs is in a deserted vineyard, and is overgrown by huge aloes: rooted in stones and

sharp rocks, they lift their thorny leaves above the opening, and conceal it effectually. A solitary fig-tree that grows near renders the spot easily recognisable by those already acquainted with the secret. The catacombs themselves are wide winding caves, the burial-place of the dead of past ages. Piles of human bones, white and bleached by time, are heaped along the rocky sides of these caverns. In one of these walks, whilst they were friends, Giorgio had shown the place to Marietta. In those days he feared not to entrust his mysterious way of life to her; for although in all common concerns she was wild and untractable, yet in all that touched the interests of those few whom she loved, Marietta was silent and reserved as Epicharis herself. The menaces Giorgio let fall in his visit on the preceding afternoon had excited her highest alarm, and she determined, at any risk, to learn the extent of the danger that hung over the stranger. After waiting in vain for Idalie's return till the close of evening, she had hastened to Capo di Monte, entered the catacombs alone, and, concealed behind a pile of bones, had awaited the arrival of the confederates. They assembled at midnight. Their first subject of consultation was the stranger. Giorgio acquainted them with his history, which he told them had been communicated to him that very morning, by a Russian lady of high consequence, who had likewise charged him with the business he had to unfold to them. He described Ladislas as a fugitive, unprotected by any government; he bore about his person certain papers which had been found in the palace of Warsaw, and were the confidential communications of the Russian Autocrat to his brother the Viceroy of Poland, and were of such a nature as to rouse all Europe in arms against their writer. These papers had been entrusted to Ladislas, whose intention was to proceed to Paris, and publish them there. Private business, however, of the greatest importance, had forced him to visit Naples before going to Paris. The Rus-

sian government had traced him to Naples, and had empowered a certain Russian lady to take any step, or go any lengths, in order to obtain these papers from Ladislas. This lady had made Giorgio her emissary; her name he carefully concealed, but Marietta averred, from his description, that it could be no other than the Princess Dashkhoff. After much consulting among the band, the assassination of the Pole had been decided upon. This seemed to be the only sure method, for he carried the papers ever about his person, was distinguished for his bravery, and if openly attacked would resist to the last. Giorgio was no stickler in the means he employed, and told his companions he had the less reason to be so in this case, as he had received assurances from the highest quarter, that his crime should go unpunished, and the reward be enormous. Ladislas was almost unknown in Naples; the government would not interest itself for a fugitive, without passport, country or name; and what friends had he here, to inquire into the circumstances of his destruction, or to interest themselves to avenge it?

Such was Marietta's tale, and Ladislas instantly acknowledged the necessity of flight. He was too well acquainted with the perfidy and barbarism of the Russians, to doubt that even a lady of a rank so distinguished as the Princess Dashkhoff, might be induced to undertake as foul a task as that attributed to her by Marietta. The worldly and artificial manners of this lady, in an Italian or a Frenchwoman, would only have resulted from habits of intrigue; but a Russian, unaccustomed to look on human life as sacred, taught by the government of her own country that cruelty and treachery are venial offences, wholly destitute of a sense of honour, concealed, under such an exterior, vices the most odious, and a callousness to guilt unknown in more civilised lands. Ladislas knew this; and he knew that the badness of the Neapolitan government afforded scope for crime, which could not exist elsewhere; and he felt that on

every account it were better to withdraw himself immediately from the scene of danger.

While musing on these things, Idalie's beseeching eyes were eloquent in imploring him to fly. He consented; but a condition was annexed to his consent, that Idalie should share his flight. He urged his suit with fervour. It were easy for them on a very brief notice to seek the young lady's confessor, induce him to bestow on them the nuptial benediction, and thus to sanctify their departure together. Marietta seconded the young lover's entreaties, and Idalie, blushing and confused, could only reply,—"My accompanying you could only increase your danger, and facilitate the bravo's means of tracing you. How could I get a passport? How leave this place?" "I have a plan for all," replied Ladislas; and he then related that the Sully steam-packet lay in the harbour of Naples, ready to sail on the shortest notice; he would engage that for their conveyance, and so speedily bid adieu to the shores of Naples, and all its perils. "But that boat," exclaimed Idalie, "that steam-packet is the very one engaged by the Princess for our excursion to Poestum, this morning." This, for a time, seemed to disarrange their schemes, but they considered that no danger could happen to Ladislas while one of a party of pleasure with the Princess, who from this act of his would be quite unsuspicious of his intended departure. At night, upon their return from Poestum, when the rest of the party should have disembarked at Naples, Ladislas and Idalie would remain on board, and the vessel immediately commence its voyage for France. This plan thus assumed a very feasible appearance, while Ladislas, in accents of fond reproach, asked Idalie wherefore she refused to share his fortunes, and accompany him in his journey; and Marietta, clapping her hands, exclaimed, "She consents! she consents! Do not ask any more, she has already yielded. We will all return to Naples. Ladislas shall proceed immediately to seek out the

captain of the Sully, and arrange all with him; while, without loss of time, we will proceed to the convent of Father Basil, and get every thing ready by the time Ladislas shall join us, which must be with as much speed as he can contrive." Idalie silently acquiesced in this arrangement, and Ladislas kissed her hand with warm and overflowing gratitude. They now contrived to stow themselves in the little calessino, and as they proceeded on their way, Ladislas said: "We seem to have forgotten the future destiny of our dear Marietta, all this time. The friendless condition in which we shall leave her fills me with anxiety. She is the preserver of my life, and we are both under the deepest obligations to her. What shall you do, Marietta, when we are gone?" "Fear not for me," exclaimed the wild girl, "it is necessary I should remain behind to arrange those things which Idalie's sudden departure will leave in sad disorder; but you will see me soon in Paris, for how can I exist apart from my sister?"

When near to Naples, Ladislas alighted from the calessino, and directed his steps towards the port, while the fair girls proceeded on their way to the convent. What the bashful conscious Idalie would have done without her sister's help, it is difficult to guess. Marietta busied herself about all; won over the priest to the sudden marriage, contrived to put up articles of dress for the fair bride's journey, and thinking of everything, with far more watchfulness and care than if her own fate had depended on the passing hour, seemed the guardian angel of the lovers. Ladislas arrived at the convent; he had been successful with the master of the steam-packet, and all was prepared. Marietta heard this from his own lips, and carried the happy news to Idalie. He did not see her till they met at the altar, where, kneeling before the venerable priest, they were united for ever. And now time, as it sped on, gave them no moment to indulge their various and overpowering feelings. Idalie

embraced her sister again and again, and entreating her to join them speedily in Paris, made her promise to write, and then, escorted by her husband, proceeded to the Sully, on board of which most of the party were already assembled.

The smoke lifted its stream of dishevelled tresses to the wind, which was right aft; the engine began to work, and the wheels to run their round. The blue wave was disturbed in its tranquil water, and cast back again in sheeted spray on its brother wave. Farewell to Naples! That Elysian city, as the poet justly calls it; that favourite of sea, and land, and sky. The hills that surround it smooth their rugged summits, and descend into gentle slopes, and opening defiles, to receive its buildings and habitations. Temples, domes, and marble palaces, are ranged round the crescent form of the bay, and above them arise dark masses, and wooded clefts, and fair gardens, whose trees are ever vernal. Before it the mighty sea binds its wild streams, and smoothes them into gentlest waves, as they kiss the silver, pebbly shore, and linger with dulcet murmur around the deep-based promontories. The heaven—who has not heard of an Italian heaven?—one intense diffusion, one serene omnipresence, for ever smiling in inextinguishable beauty above the boundless sea, and for ever bending in azure mirth over the flowing outlines of the distant mountains.

The steam-boat proceeded on its equal and swift course along the shores, each varying in beauty, and redolent with sweets. They first passed Castel-a-Mare, and then the abrupt promontories on which Sorrento and ancient Amalfi are situated. The sublimity and intense loveliness of the scene wrapt in delight each bosom, not inaccessible to pure and lofty emotions. The hills, covered with ilex, dark laurel, and bright-leaved myrtle, were mirrored in the pellucid waves, which the lower branches caressed and kissed as the winds waved them. Behind arose other hills, also covered with wood; and, more distant, forming

the grand back-ground, was sketched the huge ridge of lofty Apennines, which extends even to the foot of Italy. Still proceeding on their way to Poestum, they exchanged the rocky beach for a low and dreary shore. The dusky mountains retired inland, and leaving a waste, the abode of malaria, and the haunt of robbers, the landscape assumed a gloomy magnificence, in place of the romantic and picturesque loveliness which had before charmed their eyes. Ladislas leaned from the side of the vessel, and gazed upon the beauty of nature with sentiments too disturbed for happiness. He was annoyed by the unpropitious presence of the idle and the gay. He saw Idalie in the midst of them, and did not even wish to join her while thus situated. He shrank into himself, and tried, forgetting the immediate discomforts of his position, to think only of that paradise into which love had led him, to compensate for his patriotic sorrows. He strove patiently to endure the tedious hours of this never-ending day, during which he must play a false part, and see his bride engaged by others. While his attention was thus occupied, the voice of the Princess Dashkhoff startled him, and looking up, he wondered how a face that seemed so bland, and a voice that spoke so fair, could hide so much wickedness and deceit. As the hours passed on, his situation became irksome in the extreme. Once or twice he drew near Idalie, and tried to disengage her from the crowd; but each time he saw the Princess watching him stealthily, while his young bride, with feminine prudence avoided every opportunity of conversing apart with him. Ladislas could ill endure this. He began to fancy that he had a thousand things to say, and that their mutual safety depended on his being able to communicate them to her. He wrote a few lines hastily on the back of a letter, with a pencil, conjuring her to find some means of affording him a few minutes' conversation, and telling her that if this could not be done before, he should take occasion, while the

rest of the company were otherwise occupied, to steal from them that evening to the larger temple, and there to await her joining him, for every thing depended on his being able to speak to her. He scarcely knew what he meant as he wrote this; but driven by contradiction and impatience, and desirous of learning exactly how she meant to conduct herself on the Princess's disembarking at Naples, it seemed to him of the last importance that his request should be complied with. He was folding the paper, when the Princess was at his side, and addressed him. "A sonnet, Count Ladislas; surely a poetic imagination inspires you; may I not see it?" And she held out her hand. Taken unaware, Ladislas darted at her a look of indignation and horror, which made her step back trembling and in surprise. Was she discovered? The idea was fraught with terror. His revenge would surely be as fierce as the wrongs he suffered might well inspire. But Ladislas, perceiving the indiscretion of his conduct, masked his sensations with a smile, and replied,— "They are words of a Polish song, which I wish Idalie to translate for the amusement of your friends;" and stepping forward he gave Idalie the paper, and made his request. All pressed to know what the song was. Idalie glanced at the writing, and changing colour, was scarcely able to command her voice to make such an excuse as the imprudence of her husband rendered necessary. She said that it required time and thought, and that she could not at the moment comply; then crushing the paper between her trembling fingers, began confusedly to talk of something else. The company interchanged smiles, but even the Princess only suspected some loverlike compliment to her protégée. "Nay," she said, "we must at least know the subject of these verses: what is it? tell us, I entreat you." "Treachery," said Ladislas, unable to control his feelings. The Princess became ashy-pale; all her self-possession fled, and she turned from the searching glance of the Pole with a sickness of heart which almost punished her for her crimes.

They were now drawing near their destination. Idalie, grasping the paper, longed to read it before they should reach the shore. She tried to recede from the party, and Ladislas, watching her movements, in order to facilitate her designs entered into conversation with the Princess. He had effectually roused her fears and her curiosity, and she eagerly seized the opportunity which he offered her of conversing with him, endeavouring to find out whether he indeed suspected anything, or whether her own guilty conscience suggested the alarm with which his strange expression had filled her. Ladislas thus contrived to engross her entire attention, and led her insensibly towards the stern of the vessel; and as they leant over its side, and gazed on the waters beneath, Idalie was effectually relieved from all observation. She now disengaged herself from the rest of the party, and, walking forward, read the lines pencilled by Ladislas. Then terrified by the secret they contained, and unaccustomed to bear the weight of concealment—she tore the paper, as if fearful that its contents might be guessed, and was about to throw the fragments into the sea, when gazing cautiously round, she perceived the position of the Princess and Ladislas, and was aware that the lady's quick eye would soon discern the floating scraps, as the boat passed on. Idalie feared the least shadow of danger, so she retreated from the vessel's side, but still anxious to get rid of the perilous papers, she determined to throw them into the hold. She approached it, and looked down. Had the form of a serpent met her eye, she had not been more horror-struck; a shriek hovered on her lips, but with a strong effort she repressed it, and, staggering on, leant against the mast, trembling and aghast. She could not be deceived; it was Giorgio's dark and scowling eye that she had encountered; his sinister countenance, upturned, could not be mistaken. Was danger, then, so near, so pressing, or so inevitable? How could she convey the fatal intelligence to

her husband, and put him on his guard? She remembered his written request, with which she had previously determined in prudence not to comply. But it would now afford her an opportunity, should no other offer, of informing him of the unexpected messmate which the crew had on board.

Thus perfidy, dark hate, and trembling fear, possessed the hearts of these human beings, who, had a cursory observer seen them as they glided over that sea of beauty, beneath the azure heaven, along that enchanted shore, attended by every luxury, waited on by every obvious blessing of life—he would have imagined that they had been selected from the world for the enjoyment of perfect happiness. But sunny sky and laughing ocean appeared to Idalie only as the haunt and resort of tigers and serpents; a dark mist seemed to blot the splendour of the sky, as the guilty souls of her fellow-creatures cast their deforming shadows over its brightness.

They had now arrived close on the low shore, and horses and two or three light open carriages were at the water's edge to convey them to the temples. They landed. Ladislas presented himself to hand Idalie across the plank from the vessel to the beach. "Yes?"—he asked her, in a voice of entreaty, as he pressed her hand. She softly returned the pressure, and the word "Beware," trembled on her lips, when the young Englishman who had before admired her, and had endeavoured to engross her attention the whole day, was again at her side, to tell her that the Princess was waiting for her in her carriage, and entreated her not to delay.

The party proceeded to where those glorious relics stand, between the mountains and the sea, rising like exhalations from the waste and barren soil, alone on the wide and dusky shore. A few sheep grazed at the base of the columns, and two or three wild-eyed men, clothed in garments of undressed sheepskin, loitered about. Exclamations of wonder and delight burst

from all, while Ladislas, stealing away to the more distant one, gladly escaped from the impertinent intrusion of the crowd, to indulge in lonely reverie among these ruins. "What is man in his highest glory?" he thought. "Had we burst the bonds of Poland; and had she, in her freedom, emulated the magical achievements of Greece; nevertheless, when time, with insidious serpent windings, had dragged its length through a few more centuries, the monuments we had erected would have fallen like these, and our monuments, a new Poestum, have existed merely to excite the idiot wonder and frivolous curiosity of fools!"

Ladislas was certainly in no good humour while he thus vented his spleen; but was annoyed by two circumstances, sufficient to irritate a young philosopher: he beheld a scene, whose majestic beauty filled his soul with sensibility and awe, in the midst of a crowd of pretenders, more intent on the prospect of their pic-nic dinner, than on regarding the glories of art; and he saw his bride, surrounded by strangers, engrossed by their conversation and flattery, and unable to interchange one word or look of confidence with him. He sighed for the hours passed under the portico of Idalie's solitary pavilion, and the near prospect of their voyage did not reconcile him to the present; for his soul was disturbed by the necessity of interchanging courtesies with his enemy, and haunted by images of treacherous attempts, from which his valour could not protect him.

It had been arranged that the party should dine at the archbishop's palace, and not embark again until ten o'clock, when the moon would rise. After a couple of hours spent among the ruins, the servants informed them that their repast was ready; it was now nearly six o'clock, and after they had dined, more than two hours must elapse before they could depart. Night had gathered round the landscape, and its darkness did not invite even the most romantic to wander again among the

ruins: the Princess, eager to provide for the amusement of her guests, contrived to discover a violin, a flute, and a pipe, and with the assistance of this music, which in the hands of Italian rustics was as true to time and expression as if Weipert himself had presided, they commenced dancing. Idalie's hand was sought by the Englishman; she looked round the room, Ladislas was not there; he had doubtless repaired to the temples to wait for her, and ignorant of the presence of Giorgio, wholly unsuspicious, and off his guard, to what dangers might he not be exposed? Her blood ran cold at the thought; she decidedly refused to dance, and perceiving the Princess whirling round in a waltz at a distant part of the room, she dispatched her officious admirer on some feigned errand for refreshment, and hastily quitting the house, hurried along over the grass towards the temples. When she had first emerged into the night, the scene seemed wrapped in impenetrable darkness, but the stars shed their faint rays, and in a few moments she began to distinguish objects, and as she drew near the temple, she saw a man's form moving slowly among the columns: she did not doubt that it was her husband, wrapped in his cloak, awaiting her. She was hurrying towards him, when, leaning against one of the pillars, she saw Ladislas himself, and the other, at the same moment, exchanging his stealthy pace for a tiger-like spring. She saw a dagger flashing in his hand; she darted forward to arrest his arm, and the blow descended on her; with a faint shriek, she fell on the earth, when Ladislas turned and closed with the assassin; a mortal struggle ensued; already had Ladislas wrested the poignard from his grasp, when the villain drew another knife. Ladislas warded off the unexpected blow aimed at him with this, and plunged his own stiletto in the bravo's breast; he fell to earth with a heavy groan, and then the silence of the tomb rested on the scene; the white robe of Idalie, who lay fainting on the ground, directed Ladislas to her

side. He raised her up in speechless agony—as he beheld the blood which stained her dress; but by this time she had recovered from her swoon; she assured him her wound was slight, that it was nothing; but again sank into his arms insensible. In a moment his plan was formed; ever eager and impetuous, he executed it ere any second thought could change it. He had before resolved not to rejoin the party in the archbishop's palace, but after his interview with Idalie, to hasten on board the steam-boat; he had therefore ordered his horse to be saddled, had led it to the temple, and fastened it to one of the columns. He lifted the senseless Idalie carefully in his arms, mounted his horse, and turning his steps from the lighted and noisy palace, wound his way to the lonely shore, where he found the captain and his crew already preparing for their homeward voyage. With their help Idalie was taken on board, and Ladislas gave orders for the instant heaving of the anchor, and their immediate departure. The captain asked for the rest of the company. "They return by land," said Ladislas. As he spoke the words he felt a slight sensation of remorse, remembering the difficulty they would have to get there; and how, during the darkness of night, they might fear to proceed on their journey on a tract of country haunted by banditti; but the senseless and pale form of Idalie dissipated these thoughts: to arrive at Naples, to procure assistance for her, and then if, as he hoped, her wound was slight, to continue their voyage before the Princess Dashkhoff's return, were motives too paramount to allow him to hesitate. The captain of the Sully asked no more questions; the anchor was weighed, the wheels set in motion, and a silver light in the east announced the rising of the moon, as they stood off from the shore, and made their swift way back to Naples. They had not gone far, before the care of Ladislas revived his fair bride. Her wound was in her arm, and had merely grazed the skin. Terror for her husband,

horror for the mortal strife which had endangered his life, had caused her to faint, more than pain or loss of blood. She bound up her own arm; and then, as there appeared no necessity for medical aid, Ladislas revoked his orders for returning to Naples, but stretching out at once to sea, they began their voyage to Marseilles.

Meanwhile, during a pause in the dance, the absence of Ladislas and Idalie was observed by the feasters in the archbishop's palace. It excited some few sarcasms, which as it continued, grew more bitter. The Princess Dashkhoff joined in these, and yet she could not repress the disquietude of her heart. Had Ladislas alone been absent, her knowledge of the presence of Giorgio, and his designs, had sufficiently explained its cause, and its duration, to her; but that Idalie also should not be found might bring a witness to the crime committed, and discover her own guilty share in the deed of blood perpetrated at her instigation. At length the rising of the moon announced the hour when they were to repair to the shore. The horses and carriages were brought to the door, and then it was found that the steed of Ladislas was missing. "But the Signora Idalie, has she not provided herself with a palfrey?" asked the Englishman, sneering. They were now about to mount, when it was proposed to take a last look of the temples by moonlight. The Princess opposed this, but vainly; her conscience made her voice faint, and took from her the usual decision of her manner; so she walked on silently, half fearful that her foot might strike against some object of terror, and at every word spoken by the party, anticipating an exclamation of horror; the fitful moonbeams seemed to disclose here and there ghastly countenances and mangled limbs, and the dew of night appeared to her excited imagination as the slippery moisture of the life-blood of her victim.

They had scarcely entered the temple, when a peasant

rushed in with the news that the steam-boat was gone:—he brought back Ladislas' horse, who had put the bridle into the man's hands on embarking; and the fellow declared that the fainting Idalie was his companion. Terror at the prospect of their dark ride, indignation at the selfish proceeding of the lovers, raised every voice against them; and the Princess, whom conscience had before made the most silent, hearing that the Pole was alive and safe, was now loudest and most bitter in her remarks. As they were thus all gathered together in dismay, debating what was to be done, and the Princess Dashkhoff in no gentle terms railing at the impropriety and ingratitude of Idalie's behaviour, and declaring that Poles alone could conduct themselves with such mingled deceit and baseness, a figure all bloody arose from the ground at her feet, and as the moon cast its pale rays on his yet paler countenance, she recognised Giorgio: the ladies shrieked, the men rushed towards him, while the Princess, desiring the earth to open and swallow her, stood transfixed as by a spell, gazing on the dying man in terror and despair. "He has escaped, Lady," said Giorgio, "Ladislas has escaped your plots, and I am become their victim:" he fell as he spoke these words, and when the Englishman drew near to raise, and if possible assist him, he found that life had entirely flown.

Thus ended the adventure of the Pole at Naples.The Countess returned in her calêche alone, for none would bear her company; the next day she left Naples, and was on her way to Russia, where her crime was unknown, except to those who had been accomplices in it. Marietta spread the intelligence of her sister's marriage, and thus entirely cleared Idalie's fair fame; and quitting Italy soon after, joined the happy Ladislas and his bride at Paris.

# A Rencontre

*By* Captain [Frederick] Marryat, R. N.

*Author of "Peter Simple," etc., etc.*

From *The Book of Beauty*, 1841

# Captain Frederick Marryat

Frederick Marryat (1792-1848) *was a hard-bitten sea captain who wrote the best pure adventure stories in his period and the best sea stories of all time. Not since Smollett had English literature boasted a novelist who so admirably combined salty characters and stirring action. But Marryat had other literary virtues as well. His rich, sometimes boisterous, humor, his sea-going knowledge of men, and best of all, his supreme indifference to the current conventions of writing, give his novels a permanence shared by few in the early nineteenth century. Had he been a gifted stylist, he would have challenged Scott himself. From Marryat, Dickens learned much about natural dialogue and oddity of character, but the author of* Mr. Midshipman Easy, Peter Simple, *and* Jacob Faithful *never stooped to the fatuous melodrama and dripping sentimentality which mar the pages of the greater writer. "A Rencontre" is not the kind of story one usually associates with Marryat (in spite of the martial atmosphere*[32]*), but it is compounded with hearty spirit and seasoned with a dash of humor.*

# A Rencontre

ONE EVENING I was sitting alone in the *salle à manger* of the *Couronne d'Or*, at Boulogne, when Colonel G——, an old acquaintance, came in. After the first greeting he took a chair, and was soon as busily occupied as I was with a cigar, occasionally removed from our lips as we asked and replied to questions as to what had been our pursuits subsequent to our last rencontre. After about half an hour's chit-chat, he observed, as he lighted a fresh cigar,—

"When I was last in this room I was in company with a very strange personage."

"Male or female?" inquired I.

"Female," replied Colonel G——. "Altogether it's a story worth telling, and as it will pass away the time I will relate it you—unless you wish to retire."

As I satisfied him that I was not anxious to go to bed, and very anxious to hear his story, he narrated it as near as I can recollect in the following words:—

"I had taken my place in the diligence from Paris, and when I arrived at *Notre Dame des Victoires* it was all ready for a start; the luggage, piled up as high as an English haystack, had been covered over and buckled down, and the *conducteur* was calling out for the passengers. I took my last hasty whiff of my cigar, and unwillingly threw away more than half of a really good Havannah; for I perceived that in the *intérieur*, for which I had booked myself, there was one female already seated: and women and cigars are such great luxuries in their respective ways, that they are not to be indulged in at one and the same time,—the world would be too happy, and happiness, we are

told, is not for us here below. Not that I agree with that moral, although it comes from very high authority;—there is a great deal of happiness in this world, if you knew how to extract it; or rather, I should say, of pleasure: there is a pleasure in doing good; there is a pleasure, unfortunately, in doing wrong; there is a pleasure in looking forward, ay, and in looking backward also; there is pleasure in loving and being loved, in eating, in drinking, and though last, not least, in smoking. I do not mean to say that there are not the drawbacks of pain, regret, and even remorse; but there is a sort of pleasure even in them: it is pleasant to repent, because you know that you are doing your duty; and if there is no great pleasure in pain, it precedes an excess when it has left you. I say again, that if you know how to extract it there is a great deal of pleasure and of happiness in this world, especially if you have, as I have, a very bad memory.

" '*Allons, Messieurs!*' said the *conducteur;* and when I got in I found myself the sixth person, and opposite to the lady: for all the other passengers were of my own sex. Having fixed our hats up to the roof, wriggled and twisted a little so as to get rid of coattails, etc., all of which was effected previous to our having cleared *Rue Notre Dame des Victoires*, we began to scrutinise each other. Our female companion's veil was down and doubled, so that I could not well make her out; my other four companions were young men, all Frenchmen, apparently good-tempered, and inclined to be agreeable. A few seconds were sufficient for my reconnoitre of the gentlemen, and then my eyes were naturally turned toward the lady. She was muffled up in a winter cloak, so that her figure was not to be made out; and the veil still fell down before her face, so that only one cheek and a portion of her chin could be deciphered:—that fragment of her physiognomy was very pretty, and I watched in silence for the removal of the veil.

"I have omitted to state that, before I got into the diligence, I saw her take a very tender adieu of a very handsome woman; but, as her back was turned to me at the time, I did not see her face. She had now fallen back in her seat, and seemed disposed to commune with her own thoughts: that did not suit my views, which were to have a view of her face. Real politeness would have induced me to have left her to herself, but pretended politeness was resorted to that I might gratify my curiosity; so I inquired if she wished the window up. The answer was in the negative, and in a very sweet voice; and then there was a pause, of course—so I tried again.

" 'You are melancholy at parting with your handsome sister,' observed I, leaning forward with as much appearance of interest as I could put into my beautiful phiz.

" 'How could you have presumed that she was my sister?' replied she.

" 'From the *strong family* likeness,' rejoined I, 'I felt certain of it.'

" 'But she is only my sister-in-law, sir—my brother's wife.'

" 'Then, I presume, he chose a wife as like his sister as he could find: nothing more natural—I should have done the same.'

" 'Sir, you are very polite,' replied the lady, who lowered down the window, adding, 'I like fresh air.'

" 'Perhaps you would find yourself less incommoded if you took off your veil?'

" 'I will not ascribe that proposition to curiosity on your part, sir,' replied the lady, 'as you have already seen my face.'

" 'You cannot, then, be surprised at my wishing to see it once more.'

" 'You are very polite, sir.'

"Although her voice was soft, there was a certain quickness and decision in her manner and language which were very re-

markable. The other passengers now addressed her, and the conversation became general. The veiled lady took her share in it and shewed a great deal of smartness and repartee. In an hour more we were all very intimate. As we changed horses, I took down my hat to put into it my cigar-case which I had left in my pocket, upon which the lady observed, 'You smoke, I perceive; and so, I dare say, do all the rest of the gentlemen.—Now, do not mind me, I am fond of the smell of tobacco—I am used to it.'

"We hesitated.

" 'Nay, more, I smoke myself, and will take a cigar with you.'

"This was decisive. I offered my cigar-case—another gentleman struck a light. Lifting up her veil so as to shew a very pretty mouth, with teeth as white as snow, she put the cigar in her mouth, and set us the example. In a minute both windows were down, and everyone had a cigar in his mouth.

" 'Where did you learn to smoke, madam?' was a question put to the *incognita* by the passenger who sat next to her.

" 'Where?—in the camp—Africa—everywhere. I did belong to the army—that is, my husband was a captain of the 47th. He was killed, poor man! in the last successful expedition to Constantine:—*c'était un brave homme.*'

" 'Indeed! Were you at Constantine?'

" 'Yes, I was; I followed the army during the whole campaign.'

"The diligence stopped for supper or dinner, whichever it might be considered, and the *conducteur* threw open the doors. 'Now,' thought I, 'we shall see her face;' and so, I believe, thought the other passengers: but we were mistaken; the lady went up-stairs and had a basin of soup taken to her. When all was ready we found her in the diligence, with her veil down as before.

"This was very provoking, for she was so lively and witty in

conversation, and the features of her face which had been disclosed were so perfect, that I was really quite on a fret that she would leave me without satisfying my curiosity:—they talk of woman's curiosity, but we men have as much, after all. It became dark;—the lady evidently avoided further conversation, and we all composed ourselves as well as we could. It may be as well to state in few words, that the next morning she was as cautious and reserved as ever. The diligence arrived at this hotel—the passengers separated—and I found that the lady and I were the only two who took up our quarters there. At all events, the Frenchmen who travelled with us went away just as wise as they came.

" 'You remain here?' inquired I, as soon as we had got out of the diligence.

" 'Yes,' replied she. 'And you——'

" 'I remain here, certainly; but I hope you do not intend to remain always veiled. It is too cruel of you.'

" 'I must go to my room now and make myself a little more comfortable; after that, Mons. l'Anglais, I will speak to you. You are going over in the packet, I presume?'

" 'I am: by tomorrow's packet.'

" '*Au revoir.*'

"About an hour afterwards a message was brought to me by the *garçon*, that the lady would be happy to receive me in No. 19. I ascended to the second floor, knocked, and was told to come in.

"She was now without a veil; and what do you think was her reason for the concealment of her person?"

"By the beard of Mokanna, how can I tell?"

"Well, then, she had two of the most beautiful eyes in the world; her eyebrows were finely arched; her forehead was splendid; her mouth was tempting—in short, she was as pretty as you could wish a woman to be, only she had *broken her nose*

—a thousand pities, for it must once have been a very handsome one. Well, to continue, I made my bow.

" 'You perceive, now, sir,' said she, 'why I wore my veil down.'

" 'No, indeed,' replied I.

" 'You are very polite, or very blind,' rejoined she: 'the latter I believe not to be the fact. I did not choose to submit to the impertinence of my own countrymen in the diligence: they would have asked me a hundred questions upon my accident. But you are an Englishman, and have respect for a female who has been unfortunate.'

" 'I trust I deserve your good opinion, madam; and if I can be in any way useful to you—'

" 'You can. I shall be a stranger in England. I know that in London there is a great man, one Monsieur Lis-tong, who is very clever.'

" 'Very true, madam. If your nose, instead of having been slightly injured as it is, had been left behind you in Africa, Mr. Liston would have found you another.'

" 'If he will only repair the old one, I ask no more. You give me hopes. But the bones are crushed completely, as you must see.'

" 'That is of no consequence. Mr. Liston has put a new eye in, to my knowledge. The party was short-sighted, and saw better with the one put in by Mr. Liston, than with the one which had been left him.'

" '*Est-il possible? Mais, quel homme extraordinaire!* Perhaps you will do me the favour to sit with me, monsieur; and, if I mistake not, you have a request to make of me—*n'est ce pas?*'

" 'I feel such interest about you, madam, that I acknowledge, if it would not be too painful to you, I should like to ask a question.'

" 'Which is, How did I break my nose?—Of course you want

to know. And as it is the only return I can make for past or future obligations to you, you shall most certainly be gratified. I will not detain you now. I shall expect you to supper. Adieu, monsieur.'

"I did not, of course, fail in my appointment; and after supper, she commenced:—

" 'The question to be answered,' said she, 'is, How did you break your nose?—Is it not? Well, then, at least, I shall answer it after my own fashion. So, to begin at the beginning, I am now exactly twenty-two years old. My father was tambour-majeur in the Garde Impériale. I was born in the camp—brought up in the camp—and, finally, I was married in the camp, to a lieutenant of infantry at the time. So that, you observe, I am altogether *militaire*. As a child, I was wakened up with the drum and fife, and went to sleep with the bugles; as a girl, I became quite conversant with every military manœuvre; and now that I am a woman grown, I believe that I am more fit for the *bâton* than one half of those marshals who have gained it. I have studied little else but tactics; and have, as my poor husband said, quite a genius for them—but of that hereafter. I was married at sixteen, and have ever since followed my husband. I followed him at last to his grave. He quitted my bed for the bed of honour, where he sleeps in peace. We'll drink to his memory.'

"We emptied our glasses, when she continued:—

" 'My husband's regiment was not ordered to Africa until after the first disastrous attempt upon Constantine. It fell to our lot to assist in retrieving the honour of our army in the more successful expedition which took place, as you of course are aware of, about three months ago. I will not detain you with our embarkation or voyage. We landed from a steamer at Bona, and soon afterwards my husband's company were ordered to escort a convoy of provisions to the army which were

collecting at Mzez Ammar. Well, we arrived safely at our various camps of Dréan, Nech Meya, and Amman Berda. We made a little *détour* to visit Ghelma. I had curiosity to see it, as formerly it was an important city. I must say that a more tenable position I never beheld. But I tire you with these details.'

" 'On the contrary, I am delighted.'

" 'You are very good. I ought to have said something about the travelling in these wild countries, which is anything but pleasant. The soil is a species of clay, hard as a flint when the weather is dry, but running into a slippery paste as soon as moistened. It is, therefore, very fatiguing, especially in wet weather, when the soldiers slip about in a very laughable manner to look at, but very distressing to themselves. I travelled either on horseback or in one of the wagons, as it happened. I was too well known, and I hope I may add, too well liked, not to be as well provided for as possible. It is remarkable how soon a Frenchman will make himself comfortable, wherever he may chance to be. The camp of Mzez Ammar was as busy and as lively as if it was pitched in the heart of France. The followers had built up little cabins out of the branches of trees, with their leaves on, interwoven together, all in straight lines, forming streets, very commodious, and perfectly impervious to the withering heat. There were *restaurants*, *cafés*, *débits de vin et eau-de-vie*, sausage-sellers, butchers, grocers,—in fact, there was every trade almost, and everything you required; not very cheap certainly, but you must recollect that this little town had sprung up, as if by magic, in the heart of the desert.

" 'It was in the month of September that Damrémont ordered a *reconnaissance* in the direction of Constantine, and a battalion of my husband's regiment, the 47th, was ordered to form a part of it. I have said nothing about my husband. He was a good little man, and a brave officer, full of honour, but

very obstinate. He never would take advice, and it was nothing but "Tais-toi, Coralie," all day long—but no one is perfect. He wished me to remain in the camp, but I made it a rule never to be left behind. We set off, and I rode in one of the little carriages called *cacolets*, which had been provided for the wounded. It was terrible travelling, I was jolted to atoms in the ascent of the steep mountain called the Rass-el-akba; but we gained the summit without a shot being fired. When we arrived there, and looked down beneath us, the sight was very picturesque.There were about four or five thousand of the Arab cavalry awaiting our descent; their white bournous, as they term the long dresses in which they infold themselves, waving in the wind as they galloped at speed in every direction; while the glitter of their steel arms flashed like lightning upon your eyes. We closed our ranks and descended; the Arabs, in parties of forty or fifty, charging upon our flanks every minute, not coming to close conflict, but stopping at pistol-shot distance, discharging their guns and then wheeling off again to a distance—mere child's play, sir; nevertheless there were some of our men wounded, and the little wagon upon which I was riding was ordered up in the advance to take them in. Unfortunately, to keep clear of the troops, the driver kept too much on one side of the narrow defile through which we passed; the consequence was that the wagon upset, and I was thrown out a considerable distance down the precipice——'

" 'And broke your nose,' interrupted I.

" 'No indeed, sir, I did not. I escaped with only a few contusions about the region of the hip, which certainly lamed me for some time, and made the jolting more disagreeable than ever. Well, the *reconnaissance* succeeded. Damrémont was, however, wrong altogether. I told him so when I met him, but he was an obstinate old fool, and his answer was not as polite as it might have been, considering that at that time I was a very pretty

woman. We returned to the camp at Mzez Ammar; a few days afterwards we were attacked by the Arabs, who shewed great spirit and determination in their desultory mode of warfare, which, however, can make no impression on such troops as the French. The attack was continued for three days, when they decamped as suddenly as they had come. But this cannot be very interesting to you, monsieur.'

" 'On the contrary, do not, I beg, leave out a single remark or incident.'

" 'You are very good. I presume you know how we *militaires* like to fight our battles over again. Well, sir, we remained in camp until the arrival of the Duc de Nemours—a handsome, fair lad, who smiled upon me very graciously. On the 1st of October we set off on our expedition to Constantine; that is to say, the advanced guard did, of which my husband's company formed a portion. The weather, which had been very fine, now changed, and it rained hard all the day. The whole road was one mass of mud, and there was no end to delays and accidents. However, the weather became fine again, and on the 5th we arrived within two leagues of Constantine when the Arabs attacked us, and I was very nearly taken prisoner.'

" 'Indeed!'

" 'Yes; my husband, who, as I before observed to you, was very obstinate, would have me ride on a *caisson* in the rear; whereas I wished to be in the advance, where my advice might have been useful. The charge of the Arabs was very sudden; the three men who were with the *caisson* were sabred, and I was in the arms of a chieftain, who was wheeling round his horse to make off with me when a ball took him in the neck, and he fell with me. I disengaged myself, seized the horse by the bridle, and prevented its escape; and I also took possession of the Arab's pistols and cimeter.'

" 'Indeed!'

" 'My husband sold the horse the next day to one of our generals, who forgot to pay for it after my husband was killed. As for the cimeter and pistols, they were stolen from me that night: but what can you expect?—Our army is brave, but a little demoralized. The next day we arrived before Constantine, and we had to defile before the enemy's guns. At one portion of the road, men and horses were tumbled over by their fire; the *caisson* that I was riding upon was upset by a ball and thrown down the ravine, dragging the horses after it. I lay among the horses' legs—they kicking furiously; it was a miracle that my life was preserved: as it was——'

" 'You broke your nose,' interrupted I.

" 'No, sir, indeed I did not. I only received a kick on the arm, which obliged me to carry it in a sling for some days. The weather became very bad; we had few tents, and they were not able to resist the storms of rain and wind. We wrapped ourselves up how we could and sat in deep pools of water, and the Arabs attacked us before we could open the fire of our batteries; we were in such a pickle that, had the bad weather lasted, we must have retreated; and happy would those have been who could have once more found themselves safe in the camp of Mzez Ammar. I don't think that I ever suffered so much as I did at that time—the weather had even overcome the natural gallantry of our nation; and so far from receiving any attention, the general remark was, "What the devil do you here?" This to be said to a pretty woman!

" 'It was not till the 10th that we could manage to open the fire of our batteries. It was mud, mud, and mud again; the men and horses were covered with mud—every ball which was fired by the enemy sent up showers of mud; even the face of the Duc de Nemours was disfigured with it. I must say that our batteries were well situated, all except the great mortar battery. This I pointed out to Damrémont when he passed me,

and he was very savage. Great men don't like to be told of their faults; however, he lost his life three days afterwards from not taking my advice. He was going down the hill with Rulhières when I said to him, "Mon Général, you expose yourself too much; that which is duty in a subaltern is a fault in a general." He very politely told me to go to where he may chance to be himself now; for a cannon-ball struck him a few seconds afterwards, and he was killed on the spot. General Perrégaux was severely wounded almost at the same time. For four days the fighting was awful; battery answered to battery night and day: while from every quarter of the compass we were exposed to the fierce attacks of the Arab cavalry. The commander of our army sent a flag of truce to their town, commanding them to surrender; and, what do you think was the reply?

" ' "If you want powder, we'll supply you; if you are without bread, we will send it to you: but as long as there is one good Mussulman left alive you do not enter the town." Was not that grand? The very reply, when made known to the troops, filled them with admiration of their enemy, and they swore by their colours that they would give them no quarter.

" 'In two days, General Valée, to whom the command fell upon the death of Damrémont, considered the breach sufficiently wide for the assault, and we every hour expected that the order would be given. It came at last. My poor husband was in the second column which mounted. Strange to say, he was very melancholy on that morning, and appeared to have a presentiment of what was to take place. "Coralie," said he to me, as he was scraping the mud off his trousers with his pocket-knife, "if I fall, you will do well. I leave you as a legacy to General Valée—he will appreciate you. Do not forget to let him know my testamentary dispositions."

" 'I promised I would not. The drums beat. He kissed me on

both cheeks. "Go, my Philippe," said I; "go to glory." He did; for a mine was sprung, and he with many others was blown to atoms. I had watched the advance of the column, and was able to distinguish the form of my dear Philippe when the explosion with the vast column of smoke took place. When it cleared away, I could see the wounded in every direction hastening back; but my husband was not among them. In the meantime the other columns entered the breach—the firing was awful and the carnage dreadful. It was more than an hour after the assault commenced before the French tricolor waved upon the minarets of Constantine.

" 'It was not until the next day that I could make up my mind to search for my husband's body; but it was my duty. I climbed up the breach strewed with the corpses of our brave soldiers intermingled with those of the Arabs; but I could not find my husband. At last a head which had been blown off attracted my attention. I examined it—it was my Philippe's, blackened and burnt, and terribly disfigured: but who can disguise the fragment of a husband from the keen eyes of the wife of his bosom? I leaned over it. "My poor Philippe!" exclaimed I; and the tears were bedewing my cheeks when I perceived the Duc de Nemours close to me, with all his staff attending him. "What have we here?" said he, with surprise to those about him. "A wife, looking for her husband's body, mon Prince," replied I. "I cannot find it; but here is his head." He said something very complimentary and kind, and then walked on. I continued my search without success, and determined to take up my quarters in the town. As I clambered along, I gained a battered wall; and, putting my foot on it, it gave away with me, and I fell down several feet. Stunned with the blow, I remained for some time insensible; when I came to, I found——'

" 'That you had broken your nose.'

" 'No, indeed; I had sprained my ankle and hurt the cap of my knee, but my nose was quite perfect. You must have a little patience yet.

" 'What was found of my husband was buried in a large grave, which held the bodies and the mutilated fragments of the killed; and, having obtained possession of an apartment in Constantine, I remained there several days lamenting his fate. At last it occurred to me that his testamentary dispositions should be attended to, and I wrote to General Valée informing him of the last wishes of my husband. His reply was very short: it was, that he was excessively flattered, but press of business would not permit him to administer to the will. It was not polite.

" 'On the 26th, I quitted Constantine with a convoy of wounded men. The dysentery and the cholera made fearful ravages, and I very soon had a *caisson* all to myself. The rain again came on in torrents, and it was a dreadful funeral procession. Every minute wretches, jolted to death, were thrown down into pits by the road-side, and the cries of those who lived were dreadful. Many died of cold and hunger; and after three days we arrived at the camp of Mzez Ammar, with the loss of more than one half of our sufferers.

" 'I took possession of one of the huts built of the boughs of the trees which I formerly described, and had leisure to think over my future plans and prospects. I was young and pretty, and hope did not desert me. I had recovered my baggage, which I had left at the camp, and was now able to attend to my toilet. The young officers who were in the camp paid me great attention, and were constantly passing and repassing to have a peep at the handsome widow, as they were pleased to call me; and now comes the history of my misfortune.

" 'The cabin built of boughs which I occupied was double; one portion was fenced off from the other with a wattling of

branches, which ran up about seven feet, but not so high as the roof. In one apartment I was located, the other was occupied by a young officer who paid me attention, but who was not to my liking. I had been walking out in the cool of the evening and had returned, when I heard voices in the other apartment; I entered softly and they did not perceive my approach; they were talking about me and I must say that the expressions were very complimentary. At last one of the party observed, "Well, she is a splendid woman, and a good soldier's wife. I hope to be a general by and by, and she would not disgrace a marshal's baton. I think I shall propose to her before we leave the camp."

" 'Now, sir, I did not recognize the speaker by his voice, and, flattered by the remark, I was anxious to know who it could be who was thus prepossessed in my favour. I thought that if I could climb up on the back of the only chair which was in my apartment, I should be able to see over the partition and satisfy my curiosity. I did so, and without noise; and I was just putting my head over to take a survey of the tenants of the other apartment when the chair tilted, and down I came on the floor, and on my face. Unfortunately, I hit my nose upon the edge of the frying pan, with which my poor Philippe and I used to cook our meat: and now, sir, you know how it was that I broke my nose.'

" 'What a pity!' observed I.

" 'Yes, a great pity. I had gone through the whole campaign without any serious accident, and—But after all it was very natural: the two besetting evils of women are Vanity and Curiosity, and if you were to ascertain the truth, you would find that it is upon these two stumbling-blocks that most women are upset and break their noses.'

" 'Very true, madam,' replied I. 'I thank you for your narrative, and shall be most happy to be of any use to you. But I

will detain you from your rest no longer, so wish you a very good night.' "

"Well, Colonel," said I, as he made a sudden stop, "what occurred after that?"

"I took great care of her until we arrived in London, saw her safe to the hotel in Leicester Square and then took my leave. Whether Liston replaced her nose, and she is now *flanée*-ing about Paris, as beautiful as before her accident; or, whether his skill was useless to her, and she is among the *Sœurs de Charité*, or in a convent, I cannot say: I have never seen or heard of her since."

"Well, I know Liston, and I'll not forget to ask him about her the very first time that I meet him. Will you have another cigar?"

"No, I thank you. I've finished my cigar, my bottle, and my story, and so now good-night!"

# Jenny Tamson's Surprise

*By* Allan Cunningham

From *Friendship's Offering*, 1839

# Allan Cunningham

Allan Cunningham (1784-1842) *was another amiable Scot, a polished James Hogg, though with perhaps less genuine talent. He was an antiquarian of sorts, being interested primarily in old Scottish songs. These he learned to imitate with accuracy and facility, confounding associates who were unable to distinguish between originals and his counterfeits. Cunningham's knowledge of the fine arts, too, was deep and inclusive, and of these, as well as of literature, he proved himself a discerning critic. In the short tale Cunningham found a congenial medium. "Jenny Tamson's Surprise" is a Scots story of some worth as an example of the general level of his ability, for it abounds in the humor, tangy idiom, and hearty feeling which he cultivated.*

# Jenny Tamson's Surprise

THERE ARE sayings which become proverbial, and form what I may call the floating wisdom of mankind: and there are sayings of a limited nature, which, like the voice of the stream, are heard but in the district whence they arose. From one of these latter my little story comes.

Some years ago—but in matters of truth it is well to be particular—on the eleventh of July 1831, I wandered into a valley on the Scottish side of the Tweed, with which some of my school-boy feelings were connected. I had been a round score of years away, and all seemed altered: the hills and the streams were all that remained to me, and I set down the changes which man or time had wrought on what I loved, as personal injuries. "See," I said to myself, "the old family of Drumcoltrum is gone, and the new proprietor has cast down their tower, where the wild-hawk built for a century beyond the reach of the most venturous school-boy: and here too—the little stream which once made its way southward through a fragrant wilderness of hawthorn and hazel, and beneath whose overhanging banks of turf I used to grope for trouts—is now confined between too straight walls of stone, and lifts up its imprisoned voice, with a tone in which there is something of lament: And what is this? Why the Trysting-tree, hung in summer with garlands of honeysuckle, and beneath whose shade I first committed the double folly of love and rhyme,—is stubbed out by the merciless hoe of this bone-manuring lord, and here lies its venerable trunk withering in the sun, with the names of a hundred lovers, and the rhymes of ten district bards, obliterated forever." I could look on this no longer; so turned my steps into a little

wild rocky ravine, on whose flinty sides I was sure improvement would break its teeth if it tried them.

Here matters went more to my mind: I took off my hat, and kneeling, drank heartily from a clear cool spring, at which a thousand school-boys, as well as wild-deer, had drunk in their day; and when I looked up, the old cottage stood before me, where I now and then supped curds and cream: the same thin blue smoke seemed ascending from its wattled and rope-bound chimney: the hedge of wild plum which hemmed in the kale-yard and afforded shelter for some hives of bees, was not a hand-breadth higher than when I was last in the land: nay, I imagined the very birr of the spinning-wheel of its thrifty inmate sitting at the door in the sunshine, was the same, and the same, certainly, the air which she was crooning. I was at the old woman's elbow before she saw me. She started so as almost to overset the wheel, and exclaimed, "Hegh, sirs! this is Jenny Tamson's surprise owre again."

"Jenny Tamson's surprise," I said, "and what sort of surprise was that, dame?"

"Eh! and wha are ye that comes sae far to ask so little?" she answered tartly. "Ye'll be one of thae travellers who come and clink down an auld wife's words and looks with pencils and keelvines, into a book of travels, and come owre us a' wi' a Jenny Tamson's surprise.—Awa' wi' ye."

"No, no, Elspith," I said, holding out my hand, "ye are far mista'en in me, as the ballad says, which ye used to sing, and to which I listened, when I should have been learning the Proof Catechism. Know ye not the cheep of the bird that grew up under your own wing?"

"God guide me!" she exclaimed, "and have I ta'en ane of my ain burn-bank bairns for a stranger frae the Trent or the Thames? Ye meikle gowk! ye hae gi'en me a waur surprise than Jenny Tamson gat."

"Jenny Tamson's surprise again," I said: "why Elspith, this saying has grown up in the land since I left it!"

"A'tweel has it," replied the old dame, "and meikle beside that: were a' things to stand still, think ye, because ye were awa? But yere grown up, and I am grown down, and Jenny Tamson has waured us baith, for she's grown a lady."

"What!" I inquired, "is she one of the Thomsons of the Butterhole-brae, and cousin to the Thomsons of Nether-barfeggan?"

"The same, lad, the same," said Elspith; "but ye mauna ca' her Jenny Tamson ony mair: she's my lady now, and carries her head aboon us a': and Butterhold-brae has changed its name; they call it Bellevue, nae less; and for a reeky hovel wi' a sour hole at the door, there's a braw structure wi' pillars and tirlie-whirlies at the head, and a grand flight of polished steps, wi' an approach through the policies. As I gade by the other day, instead of the cheep of the sparrow under the thatch, there was the music of lute and dulcimer; but, wad ye believe it, the poor fowk, wha hate to see ane step at ae stride into a lady, ca' the place Bonnie Bellvue when they ask for an amous; but nae sooner is my lady's back turned, than they cry, 'Jenny Tamson's surprise—Jenny Tamson's surprise!' and so the word goes round the land."

"Well, Elspith," I said, "this is all new to me, and, I see, not very pleasing to you: what! did you expect to become a lady through the love of some young lord, like those you loved to sing about in ballads?"

"Me!" exclaimed she, "nae sic notion ever came into my pow: no but what I think the Howiesons are as worthy of the name of lady as ony Tamson that ever sauld butter light o' weight in Dumfries market. But wherefore should I desire to change my lot? Do I not sit as saft and live as bein and snug—thanks be to you—and sleep as sound—thanks be to God and a good conscience—as if I were Lady Howieson, of Howlet-

glen, and had a dozen fowls' feathers in my tappin, and half dozen idle sluts to wait on me? Na, na; I hope fortune winna come Jenny Tamson's surprise owre me."

"I trust, Elspith," I said, "that fortune will not be so spiteful; but you forget I am fasting; you owe me a bowl of curds and cream. I never get such curds and cream as yours any where."

"If I were sixty years younger, my lad," she answered, "ye might hope to come owre me with a blaw i' my lug like that. But, God forgie me, why should I say such things? Is not this house and all that is in it your ain sax times told, and why should a bondwoman who owes life and all that makes life sweet, to your own kind heart, not hasten to do her best to please one that she prays for duly night and morning?"

"It is owing to your prayers, Elspith," I said, taking her old and withered hand in mine, "that I prosper—but these are excellent curds: I think your skill increases with your age; but sit down beside me now, and tell me about Jenny Tamson's surprise. I long to hear by what strange road she walked into distinction."

"By a road not strange, but straight and beautiful," said Eslpith; "her ain loveliness and her ain merits; but ye shall judge for yourself. Ye see when douce John Tamson of the Butterhold-brae died, he left but ae child, this Jenny,—my lady now I maun ca' her,—to heir his property; for he had beside the land, which is gravelly and stony enough to justify the saying, that it was the riddlings of Nithsdale, some sheep on the hills, some cows in the byre, and some bonds in the bank. Now the lassie was fair to look upon, and mild and gentle to all, rich and poor; at the school she was up wi' the best at the lessons; in the dance ye wad hae thought her feet and the fiddle were sisters twin; and in the kirk her voice was sae sweet and melodious, that Tam Wilson, the precentor, said they might

brag in the episcopal kirk how well they worshipped God, by means of that machine called the organ; but in ae note o' Jenny Tamson's voice there was mair real rapture than in a whole St. Paul's Cathedral of pipes and whistles. Ye mauna think now that the lassie was a demure creature wi' a solemn psalm-singing look: she could be serious and thoughtful enough; but in truth she was equal to ony thin, and whatever mood she was in, she tempered all with such discretion and propriety, that the whole dale said, 'Jenny Tamson will make a capital market if her mother will let her.'

"Her mother, however, was na sic a fool as folk took her to be: she kend a light pound of butter frae a heavy one, and hawse-lock wool from hiplock; what they meant was, that she wad drive the poor lassie into some bargain, where the whole question was of bonds and not of hearts, and the quantity of land more carefully measured than the amount of affection. Weel, ye see, the lassie grew up as I said, fair to look upon, and when she was eighteen ye wadna hae seen the like o' her in a simmer-day's riding: she gaed to the kirk and was one of the doucest there: she went to the fair, and she was aye the handsomest; and she went to the harvest-dance, and seemed to trip it over men's hearts; and yet she cared for nobody, when a' fowk cared for her. It would look liesome like, were I to tell the names and numbers of those who pined for her: there was sic riding and rinning as een never saw. Butterhole-brae was like a cried fair; young men thought she would like health and strength, and the rapture of youth; old men imagined she would prefer wisdom of years; while harum-scarum Tam Frizell cried, 'Stand all aside, Jenny prefers a half-and-half man, ane that's neither auld nor young, like me.'

"But not one of them was Jenny's choice; her refusal drove Jamie Corson to the sea, where a tempest rose and swallowed him up: had she raised the storm, there might have been rea-

son in her sorrow; but she had a tender heart, owre tender, for she cried when wee Andrew Dobie died in a delirium of drink with toasting her health in brandy. 'Another half-mutchkin,' he cried, 'the thoughts of Jenny Tamson's beauty mak me mair drouthy than ordinar.'

"Her cruelty, as a rhymer called it in song, was the talk of the country side, and more than ane said her pride would get a downcome: but no downcome came: her mither took her to task; it was an awful thing to hear them at it, as my ain niece, Peg Paterson, then ane of her servants, tauld me; for if ever a mither sought to sell her daughter to the deevil, auld Luckie tried it that day; and this brings me to Jenny Tamson's surprise.

" 'Jenny,' she said, 'the crop is profitable; the butter and cheese have risen in the market; black-cattle, as well as sheep, have done us a good turn; and we are richer since your father's death by a full thousand pounds. Now all this is for Jenny Tamson, yet she gangs maiden both to kirk and market, and forgets that men of substance sigh for her, and that her mither was a wedded wife and mair at her years.'

" 'My dear mother,' said Jenny, 'you had the choice of your own heart: there is not a man in all the vale that I wish to call mine.'

" 'The choice of my heart!' exclaimed the other, 'when had woman ony sic choice? She is a slave to her parents or to custom; she cannot go up to a young fellow, and say, Lad, I love you;—she maun wait for those that fortune may send her; and when did fortune take a young thing's part, and send her the lad she loved? Na, na, Jenny, I had no choice of my own; your father was warmer with liquor than with love, when he came and wooed me: my father was by the side of the punchbowl when he gave his consent, and more was thought about the luck-penny and the exchange of commodities, than about your poor trembling-hearted mother.'

" 'Oh, mother, you make me sad to hear you!' said Jenny, shuddering at this dark page in the chapter of domestic history.

" 'Weel, but ye mauna be sad, my bonnie woman,' said her mother in a soothing voice; 'for here comes the Laird of Tulzieknowe; no so young as he was ten years since, but descended from a renowned house: they had fame in border story, the lairds of Tulzieknowe—Jenny, he will make a husband of the best.'

"Before Jenny could say a word by way of answer, the laird had sprung from his horse, and, booted and spurred, with a water-proof great-coat on, an oil-skin covered hat on his head, and a heavy brass-headed whip in his hand, came stamping into the chamber, and seated himself in an arm-chair, with a soss which made the floor quiver.

" 'Jenny,' said he, 'I have been at Lockerbie Lamb-fair, and there was not one of all the fighting Bells of Gotterbie; nor the wild Irvings of the Scroggs, durst say "peese-mum" to the Laird of Tulzieknowe: Jenny, I'll make you queen of the border; you shall be a crowned princess among all who sell lambs by the score and deal in tarred fleeces or unlaid wool.'

" 'But, laird,' said Jenny, with a look and voice of great simplicity, 'you have not come off, I fear, so well with the lads of Lockerbie as you imagine: one eye is not the same colour as the other, and there's something wrong with your brow, as if it had received what men call the Lockerbie Lick.'

" 'Aha, lass,' said he, 'you have an ee in your head; that touch on the eye was a gift from Jamie Carlyle of the Skipmire; he was led hame blind for't; and this welt on the brow was a wipe from left-handed Will Halliday; he got better than he brought—casualties, Jenny woman, casualties; but that's nought; when ye are the lady of Tulzieknowe, ye'll have some practice in the art of repairing cloured crowns and bruized banes; this hand of yours is a saft one, and will be useful in our

dale during fair-time.' As the laird said this, he gallantly seized the hand of the heiress, and all but bit it, striving to imprint a kiss on what he called its 'lamb's-wool side,' namely, the palm.

"It is not known how far this fighting gallant would have carried his homage; for he was interrupted by the coming of a second wooer; one equally boisterous and far tipsier than himself,—an Armstrong by name,—who had just succeeded to a small estate, called Howeholme, contiguous to Butterhole-brae, the careful acquisition of an uncle, who had over-reached others and pinched and pined himself to gather gains which were soon to be scattered by his heir.

" 'Heiress!' exclaimed the second wooer, 'just rise up and use your ain een, and they are bright anes, and of a similar colour, —which is mair than I can say of Tulzie's een there—and they'll convince ye that to marry me is the most profitable speculation ye ever made.' She rose as he desired, and with a demure air walked towards the window, and looked out in the direction which the new wooer pointed: 'There!' said he, 'd' ye see where the sun is shining on that fine green holm, sax hundred acres and odd; all ploughed and cultivated, and bringing clear three guineas an acre? And then, Jenny, d'ye see, that new onstead of houses; sklate roofs; stane-stairs; with corn in the barn, cows in the byre, and horses in the stable? Now, thae acres und thae houses are mine, and they shall all be thine if ye will consent to have our names called on Sunday thrice, that we may be married on Monday; for my great bet of drinking three dozen of bottled porter in three hours and a half, comes off with Will Swan, the English rider, on Tuesday, and marriage, like other follies, should be done suddenly.' She was about to answer, when he clapt his hand on her mouth, and said, 'Another word, Jenny, another word! Only look how bonnily my land lies into the Butterhole-brae; the one takes the other in its arms, and cries, Oh, to be married!'

"What answer she would have returned to this offer can only be guessed. A third wooer, a hoarder, and laird of a small pendicle called Misercraft, appeared on the field, and his coming was announced by a fit of coughing, which seemed about to separate soul and body. He recovered from this, however, and came tottering into the room, looking first at Jenny, then at her two wooers, and finally at himself; for there he was as large as life, in a looking-glass; and it was evident that he saw his whole length for the first time; he went close to the mirror, took a front view, a side view, and finally rose on tip-toe, and as he rose he smiled and muttered, 'No sae far amiss; I see mysel' to mair purpose here than in a bowie of spring-water.'

"Tulzieknowe looked at Howeholme, and Jenny looked at all three, while her mother, not at all perplexed by this surplus of woosters, began to weigh the merits—that is to say, the wealth—of each in a balance; and it was plain, from her looks, that she inclined to the last-come candidate.

" 'Jenny,' said Misercraft in a whisper, 'I have been lang in coming, and I see there are folks before me, wha, I dare say, hae tried for your hand; but they are friends, hinny, real friends; I have a wadset on the lands of Tulzieknowe, which will make ye lady of them without the fash of marrying the laird; and as for Howeholme there, I haud him by the cravat; he is coming quietly into my plaid-neuk—as quietly as I will tell ye what a gowden down-sitting ye will get; we have talked the matter owre, and made things sure and sicker, sae here's a bridal ring for ye,—it's pure gowd.'

" 'Pure gold,' replied Jenny, with a glance of which he did not see the archness, 'and would you wear and waste precious gold in a matter where bare hands can do the work?'

"The old man turned round to her mother, and said, 'O, but this is a precious lassie; I never heard such a sentiment out of ony head before; I'll tak' her in her sark; she's an inheritance of herself.'

" 'Take him, Jenny; take him,' whispered her mother; 'he has ten thousand pounds of gude set siller, and bonds and bands innumerable—never mind his looks, and as for his cough, there's music in't; his auld brass will buy you a new pan.'

"It was evident that neither Tulzieknowe nor Howeholme were easy on the appearance of this third candidate: but they resolved to put on a bold face, and uniting their forces, give him battle, in the presence of the heiress. Tulzieknowe took the field first: while the other wet his throat with a bumper of brandy, took his station a little in the rear, wiped his lips, and tried to stand steady. Tulzie cracked his whip thrice, making the knotted thong come each time within an inch of Misercraft's foot, and said,'Weel, old grip-the-gowd, we're glad to see you: od! I thought that cough of yours was serving ye heir to an inheritance in the bedral's croft: but ye have gi'en auld bare-bones the slip, and are come to woo. But a lass of warm flesh and blood canna take your iron-banded box to her bosom; and as ye have nothing warmer to offer, I would advise ye to slip hame and content yourself with your twa Dalilas, pounds and pence.'

"As he said this, he turned half-round on his heel, cracked his great whip close to the miser's face, and gave room to Howeholme, who, cheered on by brandy and a belief in his own good looks, spoke with freedom.

" 'I was hae ye, Jenny woman,' said he, 'to buy your bridal dress of a kirkyard colour, and put on a widow's cap beneath ye're feathers; for Misercraft there canna lang survive the toil, and what's warse, the outlay of bridal and bridal-dinners; ye will be a rosie young widow with a great jointure, and no a jisp the waur for having been married.'

"Loud laughed old Misercraft at this, and his laughter was mingled with a fit of coughing, in which the water of good humour ran fast from his eyes; he clapt his expanded palms, one

on his own knee, and the other on that of the heiress, and cried, 'That's good! that's capital! I never take offence at the nettlish words of real gude fallows, whose whole life is spent in driving fish into my net; I look on them as my best friends; as men, Jenny, made for thy behoof and mine: let us be kind, therefore, to these lads; they are twa bright spokes in the wheel of our fortune—I bid them baith to our bridal.'

"These words were addressed to inattentive ears, for all eyes were turned on a splendid chariot, which, preceded by two outriders, in liveries, now entered the narrow road that led to the house, and struggled up the steep ascent, showing at every jolt, on the rough and stony way, the form of a handsome young man, attired in the style approved in the circles of the south, and who, unlike some of the visitors in those magic circles, seemed as much at his ease as a peacock when it lifts its train in the sun, amid the children of the dunghill.

" 'Mair grist for my mill, mair grist for my mill, Jenny, my woman,' exclaimed Misercraft. 'This is a pigeon prepared for the plucking,—a pig ready for my spit. Jenny, ye are just as good to me as ten thousand pounds laid out at ten per cent.; ae laird drinks, anither laird fights, and a third, better than baith, puts his estate on his back, and all for my advantage: ye are a jewel of a lassie—a real jewel.'

"A message was now delivered by one of the servants: it was fast followed by the stranger himself. In he came, handsome, good-looking, and self-possessed, and with a look of demure simplicity.

" 'I have seen this chap before,' muttered old Misercraft—'seen him before, that's certain; but he's no for my mill,—he's no for my mill; a cut aboon me, a cut aboon me.'

"Tulzieknowe resolved to puzzle him out.

" 'He's a Rabson!' he said, 'and of a rough-riding race! Ye'll be the family of Foulflosh now; or, aiblins, ane of the Rabsons of Whackawa? I'm connected with them, by my mother's side.'

" 'It may be as you say, sir,' replied the stranger; 'but I come not here to settle descents or matters of pedigree: I am but a passer-by, as it were; an admirer of hill and stream, and not insensible to the beauties of Butterhole—what do you call it?—brae. The situation is really fine, and the prospect beautiful.'

"As he said this he put his glass to his eye, which Misercraft remarked was of pure gold, and stepping up to the window, surveyed the scene, which is really a fine one, with a nodding and approving look—

" 'A place,' he exclaimed, 'of great capability: fine sweep of the stream; noble ascent of the hill—but nature wants man's hand here.'—He then turned to the old dame, and inquired, 'Your sister, madam, I presume?' indicating by a nod that he meant her daughter.

" 'No, sir,' replied the dame; 'she's my ae daughter, as we of this land word it, and heiress, I may say, of a bonnie bit o' land, and a fair penny of siller. Ye'll no be o' thae parts yersel' now, I jalouse.'

"He looked full in her face, and said, 'I should think so; but I have no remembrance of the hour of my birth. A correspondent of mine desires me to inquire about one Wattie,—no, that's not it—let me look at his letter—one "Willie Leslie," whose mother was a Robson, who lived hereabouts while a boy; but you do not remember him, I see.'

" 'What gude will it do me, think ye, to remember him?' said she bitterly: 'A perfect deevil, that I should say sae! as fu' o' mischief as an egg's fu' o' meat: if he evades hanging, he'll no get his full reward.'

"The stranger, on this, walked towards the door, and seemed uncertain what to do: a whelp came to him, and began to snarl. He gave it a touch with his foot, when out sallied the mother with her bristles on end, and her white teeth shown; but when about to fly at him, she stopped, regarded him for a moment,

then set up a low howl of recognition, and ran to communicate the discovery to her whelps, who all yelped in chorus. The stranger hurried to his chariot, and drove away.

"There was one, however, who made the discovery earlier than the poor collie, and this was the heiress herself. The voice, the look, and the air of the stranger, reminded her of other days, and of a youth, the orphan son of a poor and honest pair, who, swept away by a disease, which scourged the country like a plague, left him when some seven years old, to the cold charity of the world. Yet he found friends: one put him to school, another clothed him, and a third purchased books, while from all he got a bed and a mouthful of food; though the care of no one, he took care of himself, and became a good scholar, and before he was fifteen years old, his handsome form, and manly looks were remarked by all; and as Nature took the task of superintending his manners upon herself, he was perfectly well-bred. His company was acceptable to even the wise; and those who saw far into the future began to prophesy his fate. One affirmed that he was a kindly good-hearted boy; marvellous at his book, knew more of history than ony elder of the parish, and would make a figure yet. A second, and this was the good wife of the Butterhole-brae herself, declared that he was an 'ill-deeming deevil; ever for evil and never for good, and wad come to an end that wad hae vexed his poor mother, had she been permitted to see it.'

" 'Hout-tout, good wife, ye shouldna prejudge poor Willie,' exclaimed a third; 'mair betoken that yere ain Jenny, there where she sits, and reddening like a rose—was beholden to him for mickle of the gear that makes her haud her noddle sae high now. They aften looked into ae book thegither at school, and I have seen them wi' my ain een wandering hand in hand like twa babes in the wood down the wild-cat glen—'

" 'If it is of William Leslie ye speak,' said a gipsy lass, in-

serting her tawny cheek and bright eyes between two of the crones, 'I'll tell ye for saxpence, what will become of him. He'll rin off to a far foreign land, and then come hame, and—but, dame, this is a bad sixpence: I canna withdraw the curtain of truth farther on a bit of watered copper like this.'

" 'Gae away wi' ye, insolent cuttie, as well as cheat,' cried the good wife of Butterhole-brae. 'My hen-bawks will no be the better of your visit.'

"The gipsy laughed and sang, as she tripped away, after her asses and panniers.

"All this, and much more, was present to the mind and heart of Jenny Tamson, as her eye followed the departing stranger.

" 'It's Willie himself,' she said in her thought, 'come back after his seven years' weird; and how manly and noble he looks. It is but yesterday that our cheeks lay together over the lesson at school, long after we had learned it; and it seems but an hour since we gathered blaeberries together on the Fairy-Knowe, and pulled nuts in the wild-cat linn: and the ripest and sweetest were aye for "my wee Jenny," as he loved to call me. Ay, and dearer than a', on the morning when he was missed, his last footsteps were seen under my window, and around the flowers which he planted and watered in my little garden—I have watered them frae my een since; and auld Marion the nurse told me that she saw him wandering at midnight like a spirit by the Trysting-tree, and down the walk where I have since set so many flowers; and looking around our house, and up at my window. The very dumb creature knew him, and forbore to bite: and how could I see the lad I have aye loved sae weel, pass and re-pass over my own threshold, and refrain from leaping into his arms? and yet he must have caught a glance of my ee too, and I'm sure he would see it was wet. But I deserve to lose him, were it only for listening to these three miserable apologies for manhood.'

"She rose, and her three wooers stood and looked at her, and at one another, and seemed sensible that fortune was on the turn against them.

" 'What,' she said sorrowfully, 'has the drunkard, the bully, and the miser seen in me, that they should hope for my hand, and come here with their contemptible offers, as if a woman's heart were a matter for the market? Begone!'

"As she said this, she hurried out of the house into a little neighbouring arbour, where she had planted the flowers which her lover delighted in, now so wondrously returned, and taking up an instrument of music, sought to soothe her mind with one of the airs which, when a boy, he loved. Her mother followed, and seating herself near continued to gaze on her daughter, awed by the vehemence of her feelings. While this was passing, one of her cousins came and put a letter in her hands: she allowed the instrument to escape from her grasp, and her fingers trembled so, that she could scarcely break the seal.

" 'Your heart's owre full for ought, my love,' said her mother; 'let me see this epistle;' and she snatched the letter from her daughter's hand, glanced on it, and exclaimed, 'Hegh, what a surprise! Jenny Tamson, ye'll be a lady.'

" 'Yes, madam,' said Sir William Leslie, stepping forward; 'but you will be surprised yourself to find that I am the ill deeming geet, as fu' o' mischief as an egg is fu' o' meat; but yet to whom you gave more kisses than cuffs when he was an orphan child.'

" 'Is the heaven aboon me and the earth below me?' cried the old lady, in vast surprise; 'and are ye the wee wicked ne'er-do-well that used to pull my gooseberries, steal my apples, and wad sooner hae put the kye into the corn than turned them out on't?'

" 'But, madam,' said Sir William, 'you have not bid me welcome yet; nor said that I am to be preferred as a son, to the drunkard, the bully, and the miser.'

" 'Welcome, ay welcome,' she said, 'as the flower to May, as the sun to simmer; and prefer ye as a son! I could never sunder ye when ye were bairns, and needna' try, I see, to do't now. This day shall be ane of rejoicing to me yearly as it comes round, and its name shall be Jenny Tamson's Surprise.'

"The old good-wife kept her word, and the day is still one of gladness annually to the whole country side. And sae I have tauld the tale," concluded Elspith, "of Jenny Tamson's Surprise, and how the owre word rose in the land."

# Hop-Gathering

*By* M[ARY]. R[USSELL]. MITFORD

From *Finden's Tableaux*, 1841

*"Who would give a bird the lie?"*

SHAKESPEARE

# Mary Russell Mitford

*"Hop-Gathering" is another pleasant story by* Miss Mitford *which has not been collected or reprinted.*[33] *It was contributed to* Finden's Tableaux, *an elaborate annual (published in folio volumes, elegantly "embellished") edited by the author herself. In this undertaking one of her associates and frequent contributors was Elizabeth Barrett. It appears that the various articles were written to suit the engravings available. For some years they dealt with scenes from early British history. These were not agreeable material for Miss Mitford, and it was not until the last issues that she found excuse to resume her village sketches. "Hop-Gathering" has no plot worth mentioning; but with such description who would cavil?*

# Hop-Gathering

I DO NOT know whether in the list of organs which figure upon the skull-maps in the system of Doctors Gall and Spurzheim, there be any which being translated (for of a verity the language of phrenology needs translation) would indicate a fondness for animals. Most assuredly, if no such propensity be therein marked, it is an important omission, and should be supplied forthwith; for that such an inclination does exist most strongly in numberless individuals of both sexes, and is often developed under the most extraordinary disadvantages, is as certain and far more frequent than the prodigies in music and painting, in languages and in calculation, the Mozarts, the Correggios, the admirable Crichtons, and American boys, those wonders of learning, of science, and of art, whose lives crowd our biographical dictionaries, and whose heads (as handed down in books and portraits) form the triumph of the phrenologist.

Separate from the fondness for animals generally, and more distinctive and engrossing perhaps than any other species of that very engrossing propensity, is the passion for birds. Boys are liable to it as a class; and so they say is that particular order of single women ungallantly termed old maids. It prevails a good deal in certain callings, chiefly among sedentary artisans, such as tailors, shoemakers, and hair-dressers in provincial towns. A barber in Belford Regis is amongst the most eminent fanciers of the profession, and wins all the prizes at canary-shows for twenty miles round.

Also the taste is apt to run in families, descending from father to son through many generations. Ours, for instance, happens

to be so distinguished. My grandfather had an extensive aviary, and was a celebrated breeder of the whole tribe of songbirds, and his brother, my grand-uncle, is even now remembered as the first importer of the nightingale into Northumberland. He had two in cages which he kept for several years, to the unspeakable delight of the nieghbourhood, who used to crowd around his hospitable door to listen to their matchless note—one of the few celebrated things in the world which thoroughly deserves its reputation.

My dear father is no degenerate descendant of his bird-loving progenitors. It was but the other night that he was telling me under what circumstances he first went to the play. When a little boy at a preparatory school at Hexham, a strolling company visited the town, and being about to get up "The Padlock," recommended, I suppose, by the fewness of the characters, and in great distress for a bullfinch, a property essential to Leonora's song,—

> "Say, little foolish fluttering thing,
> Whither, ah whither would you wing
> Your airy flight?"

the manager, having heard that he possessed a tame bullfinch, came to him to request the loan, which he granted with characteristic good humour, and received in return from the grateful manager a free admittance for the season. Fancy the pride and delight of the boy in seeing his favourite figuring upon the stage, and hearing the applause of the audiences as he perched upon the prima donna's finger! This must have been considerably above seventy years ago; and (for in this respect, as well as in his general kindness, "the boy was father to the man") the fancy has remained ever since in full force and constant exercise. There is scarcely any sort of bird that comes within the compass of moderate means which he has not possessed at one period or another. Once during the twenty years that we

lived in a large country-house, with its spacious lawn, its extensive paddock, and noble piece of water, he assembled a great quantity of domestic game, if such a phrase be admissible; pretty speckled partridges—too pretty to be eaten; pheasants of all varieties, from the splendid English bird to its eastern rivals, the golden and the silver; and a large assortment of waterfowl, from the queenly swan down to the trim little Dutch teal. King Charles himself never had a more extensive collection, or took greater delight in tending and cherishing his feathered subjects. But these half-civilised savages proved attractive to two orders of miscreants,—poachers pursued them by day and thieves by night; and dead or alive, shot or stolen, the domesticated partridges and tame wild ducks gradually disappeared. To them succeeded all manner of curious poultry—peacocks, pied and white; together with that commoner but most gorgeous kind, who flaunts his starry train over the grass, and whose graceful vanity so becomes his stately beauty, adorned our farm-yard, accompanied by Muscovy ducks, Poland fowls, Friezland hares, crested bantams, and so forth. Then followed pigeons of all denominations—fantails, pouters, carriers, nuns, and dragons, crowded our dovecote. But somehow or other our ill luck continued. The poultry had a trick of dying, and the pigeons flew away; so that my father resolved to confine himself to the aviary, and took to breeding canaries, and had the honour of carrying away the prize for three birds of the three orthodox kinds, jonque, pied, and mealy, from nearly two hundred competitors.

Long, too long, would it be to tell of all the smaller songsters, the larks, linnets, thrushes, and blackbirds, the bullfinches, goldfinches, and "all the finches of the grove," as well as of the owls, hawks, crows, and ravens, the birds of day and the birds of night, which have at different times occupied his attention. Suffice it to say, that in the month of August last our

feathered family consisted of two nightingales, one of which had been in our possession for sixteen months, singing all day (for in a cage the nightingale only sings during daylight), with matchless strength and power, from the first of October to the last of June; a piping bullfinch, a linnet, two starlings, and the magpie whose adventures and accomplishments form the subject of this true history.

Among our infinite variety of feathered bipeds, the class which in default of a better name I shall take leave to denominate talking-birds had been upon the whole the most distinguished. Even I, who, partly on account of the tragical termination of many of our pets, partly because I so dearly love freedom and the greenwood, that all the hemp-seed and groundsel in the world would never, I am very sure, reconcile me to a cage, do not so heartily sympathise in this taste of my dear father's as I do in most of his other pursuits—even I, albeit no bird-fancier, could not help being occasionally diverted by the saucy chattering jays, starlings, and jackdaws, which it was the especial delight of that saucy chattering diverting personage, Master Ben, our factotum (groom, gardener, page, and jester), to bring about the place.

Pre-eminent over all other talking-birds, and unrivalled since the days of Vert-vert, was the magpie in question. He, for a wonder, was not of Ben's importing. Whence he came nobody knew, although the old molecatcher, who was also the parish sexton, and whom he followed for a whole hour in the twilight as he was setting his traps to catch an underground enemy that infested my pansy-beds, alternately shouting to him by his name of Peter Tomkins in one ear, and imitating the tolling of a bell in the other, insinuated to me, with a look of great horror, that "the fewer questions were asked upon that subject the better; the creature was certainly no better than he should be. Nobody could tell for whom that bell would

toll next." And off shuffled poor Peter, fancying himself a doomed man.

For certain, Mag's first appearance had been somewhat in character with the good sexton's suspicions. He had hopped down the walk and stopped opposite the glass-door of our garden-room, where we were sitting with several friends, and one amongst them happened to inquire the hour. "What's o'clock?" reiterated Mag, in a soft, slow, distinct voice; "Half-past four." And upon consulting watches, and that very true time-teller, the sun, as he threw his beams upon the old dial, half-past four it was; and everybody stared at the bird, as he stood upon one leg, with his head a little on one side, looking very knowing and exceedingly ragged and dirty, as your tame magpie is apt to do. Everybody stared at the bird, and laughed, and said that it was a strange coincidence, as everybody does say, upon such occasions.

Mag's further proceedings were in keeping with this oracular entree. A saucy bird he was, and a mischievous, singing, whistling, sneezing, coughing, blowing his nose, laughing, crying, knocking at doors, ringing of bells, thieving, and hiding with singular dexterity. He caught up and repeated with remarkable facility all that was said, and really seemed as if he understood its purport. For instance, I one day said to him, "Mag, if you bite my finger, I will never give you any more fruit or sugar." And although I regularly did feed him every day with sugar and fruit, mine were the only fingers in the house that remained unbitten. He certainly, too, could apply names to their right owners. One of his great delights was to summon all the servants about him; sometimes in his own soft distinct tone—sometimes by imitating with a wonderful clearness, my voice, or his master's. "Ben! John! Martha! Lucy! Marianne!" And, when he had got them all around him, "Go" he would say, "Go to ——;" and, when every body was expecting some-

thing as naughty as Vert-vert would have said, after his voyage in the coche d'eau had contaminated his manners, he would suddenly break into a laugh, and finish his sentence with "Go to Jerusalem! Go to Jerusalem!" He never failed to call over this beadroll of names at least once a-day, and if the wrong person answered, Lucy for Marianne, or Martha for Lucy, he would stamp his little foot, and scold, and storm and refuse to be pacified, until the offender begged pardon and asked him to begin his catalogue again. Sometimes he added the dogs to the list, and the greyhounds—a simple, credulous, innocent race—readily answered to his call. Once, and but once, he took in Flush, a beautiful little brown cocking spaniel, a greater pet even than himself, and infinitely more sagacious. "Flush!" said Mag, with an imitation of my voice that was even startling; and Flush, who was looking forward to our evening walk, threw down his bone and ran to answer the summons. "Flush!" repeated Mag, in the same tone, with a nod and a laugh! In my life I never saw such a mixture of shame and anger as my beautiful pet's large bright eyes exhibited. Mag tried the trick again. But it failed. The perfect good faith of the gentle and faithful little creature, who, never deceiving, could not suspect deceit, had enabled the knavish bird to cheat him *once;* but the imposition, once detected, became, so far as Flush was concerned, altogether powerless.

Nevertheless there was no resisting a certain degree of liking for the poor bird, whose stock of drollery—for every day he came out with something fresh—really seemed inexhaustible. He had a cage, to which, being generally fed there, he frequently retired of his own free will. One day, however, he was missing; that tongue of his was a thing to be missed, just as the near neighbours of a mill or a church-steeple would soon feel the absence of the clapper and the chimes. He had left the premises more than once before, and had led Ben and John a

dance amongst all the trees and cottages of Aberleigh—appearing and disappearing—now on the ground and now on the house-top, and playing at bo-peep among the roofs and chimneys in a manner more provoking than words can tell; so that Ben, after fairly lodging his new straw hat on the branches of a pear-tree, from the topmost bough of which Mag, swinging much at his ease, had thought fit to hail him with his usual "How d'ye do, Master Ben?" had fairly given up the chase in despair. Once, twice, thrice, had Mag eloped; but then the tricksy spirit had never failed to make itself audible; and even when, upon one occasion, he had absented himself for one entire night, he had taken care to re-appear in the morning at Ben's bedroom-window with his usual tap, tap, tap, against the glass, and the grave business-like summons,—"Past six o'clock, Ben! Time to get up!"—wherewith he was wont, as regularly as the clock struck, to awaken that trusty domestic. Only the Tuesday before, Mag had been absent for a longer period than common; but, directed by a singular noise of fierce and angry jabbering, something like the scolding of women in passion, he had been discovered in a field at the bottom of the garden, engaged in a furious disputation with two wild birds of his own species, earnestly defending a bare and dirty bone, his own property doubtless, from the incursions of these intruders. That Mag had fought with other weapons than his tongue, and been worsted—that he was very glad when our approach frightened away his opponents—was quite plain; but they being gone, he gladly followed us home in the opposite direction, and had, up to this unfortunate Friday (for it was upon this day of ill luck that we missed our poor bird), conducted himself with a degree of prudence and discretion that showed him to have taken warning by his contest and discomfiture. On that Friday, however, he was missing from noon to night; the next morning dawned—six o'clock struck—but no magpie

tapped at the window to call Ben; he was neither in the house or the garden, on the trees or the chimneys. That the poor bird was lost seemed indisputable; and so strong was the general impression of his attachment to us, and of his sagacity, that we were pretty generally convinced that he must have been stolen. Who might be the thief was not so easy to determine. Aberleigh is situated upon a well-frequented road leading from one great town to another, and our cottage stands in the centre of the village street. Moreover, holding a sort of middle station between the gentry, to whom we belong by birth, and habits, and old associations, and the country-people, almost our equals in fortune, who all resort to my dear father for advice and assistance in their little difficulties, there is scarcely a person within ten miles who does not occasionally pay a visit to our habitation. Then Ben's acquaintance! gardeners, gamekeepers, cricketers, grooms! Ben knows the whole country. And although it would be rather too affronting to suspect one's friends and acquaintances of thievery, yet they amongst whom the magpie was deservedly popular had of course contributed to diffuse his reputation.

On that unlucky Friday, too, we had had even more visitors than common. Two or three sets of people had come from London by railway; five or six neighbouring families had called; the coursing-season was coming on, and two or three brace of greyhounds had been brought by their respective owners to be compared with our dogs; a flower-show was approaching, and half-a-dozen gardeners had been backward and forward amongst zinnias and dahlias; a cricket-match was pending, and the greater part of the two elevens had come to arrange the day and the hour; one constable had arrived for orders to send off an encampment of gipsies who had established themselves in Woodcock-lane, and another had come for a warrant to take up a party of vagrants caught in the act of poaching, and

suspected of sheep-stealing at Hinton-Down. Who was the thief was still a mystery! But when day after day passed over, and no tidings arrived of our bird, that he was stolen became the firm conviction of our whole family.

Sorry, however, as we were for the merry, saucy, little creature, whose spirit of enjoyment and activity of intellect seemed so disproportioned to his diminutive form and his low rank in the scale of living beings, still the recollection began to wear away; and when at the expiration of a week we sallied forth to partake of a dejeuner in the beautiful grounds of Aberleigh Great House, our domestic calamity was, to say the truth, pretty nearly forgotten.

Never was a more delightful little party than assembled by the side of the clear brimming Loddon on a glorious afternoon near the end of August. The day was so sultry that the tables were laid under some magnificent elms upon the lawn, forming with its adjuncts of picturesque architecture, of exquisite scenery, of lovely young women and thrice lovely children, a picture of gay and courtly elegance worthy of Watteau. The dejeuner, however, sumptuous and luxurious as it was, formed by no means the chief attraction of the day. Under the long lofty terrace, crowned with old firs and lime-trees, which forms the boundary of Aberleigh Park, the Loddon, spreading for nearly a mile into an almost lake-like expanse, rivals the Thames in consequence, whilst it far surpasses it in beauty; and then, narrowing as it is spanned by the low arches of the bridge, glides along amongst quiet water-meadows with a pastoral seclusion and tranquillity which would have enchanted Izaak Walton. A row up this bright river was the express intention of the party; and, accordingly, the grand question of oars or sculls being decided, water bailed out, rowlocks and thowls examined, we set forth in three as pretty skiffs as may be seen between Battersea and Putney Bridge; ourselves as merry and

happy a set of people as are often assembled in this work-a-day world.

Some were sailors—one especially, most worthy of that honoured name, which is the synonym of all that is frank and kind and true-hearted in man; and one, who by some mistake in destiny is not really a sailor, but who possesses all the attributes and almost the skill—some were sailors, some were soldiers, some gentlemen at large: but the charm of the party was felt to be the freight of one of the boats, consisting of four lovely young women singing like nightingales, and, as it seemed, from the same impulse of a full and joyous heart, who went backward and forward upon the water, spreading abroad melody, as the sun diffuses light or the roses their perfume. That craft was naturally looked to as the one from which we should derive most pleasure, but we hardly on embarking anticipated the kind of amusement which it was destined to afford.

It so happened that one of their rowers was accidentally detained, and another compelled to take the management of the boat containing the children, so that our pretty songstresses fell to the charge of one solitary boatman, who, taking care that no real harm should befall them, seemed to find some diversion in plunging them and himself into small difficulties; and, the rudder being unshipped, they, so to say, staggered about upon the water as if the boat were tipsy; now running aground upon an island, now taking a snag (to borrow a phrase current upon the Mississippi); now caught (by veil and bonnet) in the bushes upon one bank, now entangled in the sedges upon the other, until the syrens of the Loddon, half-frightened and half-amused, mixed screams and squalls with the sweet strains of the Canadian boat-song, and shrieks of laughter with "A boat, a boat unto the ferry."

After shooting the bridge matters grew worse. They had sailed from harbour so long before our boat, that we had hither-

to only looked and laughed at the strange tacks, voluntary and involuntary, which their skiff had taken. But now gallantly manned and ably steered, we shot ahead of them, drowning "O Pescator del'onde" by such a torrent of river wit as shall not be exceeded from Gravesend to Kew.

At last, when, amid laughing and singing, and quiet enjoyment, the mists were rising in the meadows, and the moon looking down into that bright mirror the still smooth stream, we took our fair damsels in tow, and prepared to return homeward. Looking up as we were about to shoot the centre arch of the bridge, I saw a strange vagabondising gipsy sort of light cart, that looked as if it had never paid any duty, passing above it; and while our mermaids were singing, with a delightful unity of their young voices,

> "Oft in the stilly night,
> Ere slumber's charm has— "

"bound me," they would have added, but that charm was broken by a well-known voice from above, which pronounced with startling distinctness, "Go, go, go to Jerusalem!"

Was it my magpie, or was it his wraith?

Of course, by night, a good mile from our landing-place, and then a mile back again to the bridge, all search or inquiry was hopeless. I told the story when I got home, and found the whole village divided in opinion. Some thought with me that the gipsies had hold of him; some with my father that he had been stolen by the more regular thieves; some thought that it was a trick; some that it was a mistake; and some held with Peter Tomkins that the magpie was no magpie after all, but an incarnation of the Evil One in black and white plumage.

Again was poor Mag forgotten, as one bright September morning we set forth towards Farnham, a pretty old-fashioned town overlooked by the bishop's palace, with its stately trees

and extensive park, and famous for its hop-gardens, and for Mr. Garth's geraniums, where in one small greenhouse he rivals in splendour, although not in extent, Mr. Foster's exquisite collection, and equals him in hospitality and kindness. It is something remarkable, I think, something pleasant as well as remarkable, and peculiar to our age and country, that two English gentlemen should surpass, by the mere effect of taste and skill, the efforts of the two working gardeners, whose livelihood depends upon their flowers, with the strong stimulus of desire of gain on the one hand, and the enormous resources of wealth as lavished in the greenhouses of our great noblemen on the other. To raise a magnificent geranium is to increase and multiply beauty, and to strengthen and diffuse the feeling of the beautiful in this work-a-day world. Art herself does little more.

The road from Aberleigh to Farnham passes through very pretty and very interesting scenery. We leave Strathfieldsaye and Silchester, emblems of the present and the past, to the right; and Sir John Cope's magnificent old mansion of Bramshill, and the parsonage at Heckfield, where Mrs. Trollope passed her early days, to the left. Then we pass through a succession of wild woodland country to the little town of Odiham; plunging again into forestlike glades, until we cross a high, barren, heathy ridge called the Hog's Back, the view from the top of which forms a superb and extensive panorama. Descending this long, steep, and lofty hill, we find ourselves once more amidst cultivation; quaint old-fashioned villages sunk deep in the valley, and patches of hop-gardens intersecting the fields. The hop-gatherers were busy in taking down and stripping the long poles, the English vintage; and the bines hung like garlands in rich wreaths of leaves and flowers intertwined one with another, and diffusing around the bitter racy aroma of the fragrant plant, dear to the lovers of mighty ale. A pretty

scene it was and a stirring. We stopped the carriage at the gate to view it more closely, and listen to the gay jests and merriment of the many groups collected in the ground. There is something contagious in real hearty mirth, and Ben our driver, without knowing why, joined in the laugh. Apparently his peculiar laughter was recognised; for in a moment we heard from the other side of the gate, "Ben! how d'ye do, Ben? Glad to see you, Master Ben! Go to Jerusalem!" in Mag's most triumphant tones; and this time we did not hear in vain. We recovered our bird; and here he is at this moment, happiest, sauciest, and most sagacious of magpies.

# The Lawyer Who Cost His Client Nothing*

## *A Tale*

*By* Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, Bart.

From *The Keepsake*, 1848

* From the "Thresor d'Histoires Admirables et Memorables de nostre Temps. Par Simon Goulart, Senlisien. MDC.XX." A Rare book, from which Sterne borrowed with his usual hardihood and felicity.

# Lord Lytton

Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer (1803-1873), *afterwards Lord Lytton, was one of the most prolific writers of the nineteenth century; and if public opinion be the criterion, one of the most successful. With an unremitting industry and tireless energy that must have shamed and chagrined his more human rivals, Lytton ground out an amazing series of books: fiction, poetry, essay, and criticism. A few of the plays, notably* Richelieu (*which is periodically revived by popular actors*), *are remembered; but it is as a novelist that Lytton has achieved popular renown.* The Last Days of Pompeii, Rienzi, The Last of the Barons, *and* Harold *until very recently adorned the bookshelves of many ornate living rooms, and gave their middle-class owners a comfortable sense of impeccable taste. Better but lesser known novels are* Pelham, Eugene Aram, *and* The Haunted and the Haunters. *The last is a minor classic of the occult, a subject which Lytton was passionately fond of and which he introduced into many stories, sometimes incongruously. He kept his ear to the ground, caught the rumblings of changes in public fancy, and anticipated the new literary fashion; hence, for half a century the latest Lytton novel was one of the things to read. But such a lack of artistic conscience carried with it inevitable retribution, and Lytton is no more. "The Lawyer Who Cost his Client Nothing" combines two of the author's loves, the Middle Ages and the supernatural. As a tale it has, in spite of its theatricality, much to recommend it.*

# The Lawyer Who Cost His Client Nothing

IN THE YEAR 1541, and on the second day of September, towards sunset, the little children playing in the meadows at the outskirts of a certain small town in the Marquisate of Brandebourg, were startled by the apparition of a tall man clad in half-armour, who had descended from the hill to the west so noiselessly, that he was in the midst of the young group before they perceived him. They suspended their sports to stare at the stranger, and were struck by the ghastly paleness of the features, which were seen through the open bars of the morion. The man's step was unsteady and reeling, and he uttered some inarticulate sounds of pain and distress, as he sought to unbuckle his heavy head gear. In truth, the poor man was overcome by a sharp attack of aguish fever. He was a soldier on his return from Hungary; the heat of the day and the weight of his arms had overtired a frame in which the wounds of a sharp campaign were scarcely scarred over, and, while gasping out his prayer to the urchins to direct him to the nearest inn, he fell to the ground exhausted, and almost insensible. The children ran to call the guards who were loitering round the gates of the town, and the soldier was conveyed to the principal hostelry of the place.

Mine host received the guest with more politeness than was common to him; but, in truth, that was just the period when the little ready money in circulation was chiefly to be found in the pouch of a man-at-arms returning from the wars with his pay and his plunder; and the landlord had no doubt that the soldier had wherewithal to pay for his lodging if he recovered,

or his burial if he died. The hostess herself, a comely-looking woman enough, undertook to watch and nurse the poor man. And the neighbours were much edified with the charitable dispositions of their fellow-townspeople.

The soldier had evinced small signs of life when they stripped him of his mail, but when they came to take off his heavy boots, he opened his eyes, and made vehement but ineffectual attempts to speak. At length, as he saw the host carrying the boots from the chamber in which he was placed, probably with the friendly intention to clean and grease them, the soldier contrived to utter sounds of so much uneasiness and anger, that the host stood arrested at the doorway; the soldier then, with a convulsive effort, staggered to the host, clutched for him, and making a pillow of the boot thus selected, fell into the sleep or stupor of exhaustion.

The boot excited the most profound interest in the breasts both of host and hostess. They retired a little while from the chamber to talk of the boot;—they pondered over the boot—they discussed the boot—they agreed in their surmises, that in that boot there was more than met the eye.

They returned to the bedside of the soldier, he seemed still asleep; the hostess tickled his ear, the soldier moved his head, and the host gave a gentle tug at the boot; the soldier started, his brows met, and, though without opening his eyes or waking, he seemed to feel aware that the boot was in danger—he threw his right arm tightly round it, and dropped his head again upon the boot, with all that weight and solidity which are the characteristics of a head obstinately in earnest.

"Thousand devils!" quoth the host. "But, after all, the man can't live; he seems at death's door, and then we shall know what there is in the boot!"

A clamour of voices below summoned the landlord to a bevy of guests just arrived. The hostess remained to watch the stranger.

A few hours afterwards the soldier woke up. He had recovered his senses, but he was extremely feeble and exhausted. The kind hostess bent over him with a cordial, in which she had put a full pint of the newest and headiest wine which the Marquisate of Brandebourg afforded to its inhabitants. The soldier was much moved by her attention, and somewhat revived by the draught. What with his gratitude, and what with the wine, the poor man became pathetic; he forgot the caution proverbially habitual in a military veteran, and illness unpreceded by gun-wounds being a thing extremely new to his experience, he really had a strong presentiment that he should never again rise to any trump but the last. With these thoughts he faltered out, "Ah, dear and charitable frau, it is a comfort to have a woman near one's bedside at the hour of death; a woman, you see, feels for a little one about to be an orphan. You have children, dear frau?"

"I had one—a boy," said the hostess, lifting up her eyes, as much as to say, "he is in heaven!" and indeed his last act had been in a heavenward direction, seeing that he had been hanged on a tree as a spy, by a murderous old Bohemian general.

"Well," said the soldier, whining, "I have a poor little girl at home in Heilbronn, where I was going to spend the rest of my days. I had been saving and scraping for my old age, but God is pleased to cut me off—the money will go to her, and find her a husband. Wherefore, I pray you, as you value your soul, to take care of this boot, and as soon as the breath is out of my body, rip open the inner leather, and you will find it well lined with gold coin. Pay yourself, charitable frau—pay for my burial, and seven masses for my soul, and convey the rest to my little girl, Bettine Karnerach, at the forge, opposite the convent at Heilbronn."

"God be with you, friend," answered the hostess, wiping her eyes, "and I hope you will live this many a year. But if it

be otherwise, make your mind easy, not a stiver will I touch of your hoard; and the boot shall go, without need of a cobbler, to your little girl, Bettine Karnerach, at the forge, opposite the convent at Heilbronn."

The soldier wrung the hostess's hand with his dry hot palm, and the good woman continued—

"But in case of the worst, seeing how the priests and the leeches get round a man when he is supposed to be dying—seeing, too, that in a public inn all sorts of characters, good and bad, must abound, and that I cannot always be at your bedside—considering all this, soldier-friend, think you not it might be the wisest to give me the boot at once to take charge of? I should never get over it, if the tinker, who lodges next room to you, and who has not the best of reputation for honesty, should slip the boot from under your head while you are asleep. And indeed such a pillow tells its own tale of the stuffing!"

"Right," quoth the soldier, dejectedly. "Poor companion, who has trudged with me so long, farewell! perhaps for ever. Take it dear frau—I have not the heart to give it thee."

The hostess seized the boot with one hand—with the other she tucked the coverlid round the sick man; and the wine beginning to work, he fell into a heavy doze as she stole from the room to her husband.

As soon as this wicked couple had thus got hold of the boot, unripped the leather, and locked up the coins, deuce a bit more cared they for the soldier! They had not the courage to murder him, for fear of detection; but by letting him alone, without doctor or nurse, drink or food, they took it for granted that he would of himself soon depart from this life. The room in which he was placed being in a remote corner of the house, neither tinker nor other living soul slept at hand, to hear his moans or come to his call—so they left him to die as soon as he pleased. All the next day, the poor soldier, abandoned and deserted,

wrestled hard with his malady. He could not make his piteous voice heard much beyond the threshold; the hostess now and then crept to the door to listen if he still breathed, and though his sighs and broken exclamations might have melted a heart of stone, that accursed boot stopped up her ears to all humanity and nature.

Confident, at least, that he would not get over the night, the miserable pair retold their treasure, and composed themselves merrily to sleep.

At the dead of the night, the thirst of the sufferer became so irresistible that it gave him the strength of desperation, to rise and crawl forth in search of water. Perhaps, indeed, the total abstinence from food for twenty-four hours somewhat served to assist, rather than diminish, the exhausted powers of nature. He contrived, though with great difficulty, to crawl down the stairs, open the kitchen-door, and find his way to the trough in the yard, at which the horses were watered. Of this unpalatable beverage he drank heartily, and found himself refreshed —when, in tottering back, he fell unawares into a huge cistern. Now, whether the shock of the immersion, or the previous draughts of cold water, wrought a critical change in his complaint, or that the disease of itself had taken a favourable turn, the historian saith not, but on regaining his bed, he broke out into a salutary perspiration, slept soundly, and woke the next morning, still somewhat weak, it is true, but prodigiously hungry, and with sufficient strength to resume his clothes and armour (which were by his bedside), gird on his sword, and, dressed in all save his boots, descend into the kitchen. The hostess was already astir, and a ghost from the grave would not have startled her so much as the sight of her living guest. Nay, one may venture to assert, that if she could have exchanged the guest for a ghost, she would have deemed herself a lucky woman.

Though greatly indignant at the inhumanity with which he had been deserted, the soldier had no suspicion that the active crime of robbery would be added to the passive infamy of abandonment; and being naturally of a proud temper, he disdained to enter into long and idle reproaches. Therefore, scarcely looking at the hostess, but seating himself at the table, he said briefly—

"Give me a manchet and a flask; bring me my boots, and tell me what there is to pay. God's mercy, one comfort after starving is to think the reckoning will be all the lighter!"

The hostess said not a word, but she ran to her husband, who was still in his room, ruminating certain plans which the contents of the soldier's boot would enable him to adopt. Mine host swore sundry great oaths when he heard that his guest was waiting for breakfast in the kitchen. What was to be done? The boots, at all events, must be returned. Between the two they cobbled up the rent they had made in the inner leather of the right boot, sponged off the dust from both, and sent them down to the soldier by the maid, with orders to accompany them by the comestibles requested. By this time the kitchen had become pretty full of labourers and idlers in the habit of taking their morning draught at the inn; and all turned with curiosity as the manchet, the flask, and an immense pair of boots were placed on the table before the grim, pale soldier. Kaspar Karnerach (for such was his name) was too much gnawed by his hunger to examine the boots until he had finished the flask and the manchet; but then, lifting the right boot, its astonishing lightness struck him with terror and suspicion. He passed his hand into the interior, and the unsatisfactory touch left no doubt that his strange valise had been rifled. Kaspar Karnerach was not a patient man. But even the most patient seldom submit to be robbed without a murmer,—"Ah, sow that would devour thine own farrow—ah, miserable woman,

thief and traitress, what hast thou done with the charge I consigned to thee? My gold crowns—my gold crowns—my gold crowns! Where art thou, traitress?"

While bursting forth into such like, and much worse, vollies of vituperation, the soldier strode to and fro like one distracted; and finding that no hostess came to his call, he disappeared from the sight of the startled customers in search of the untrustworthy bankeress he had so lucklessly selected.

In a few minutes more, loud cries, yells, and oaths, were heard on the stairs above, and presently Kaspar reappeared, foaming with rage, belabouring the host, whom he pushed before him, with the violated boot, while with the left hand he dragged the hostess by the arm, careless of the kicks and pinches with which she returned his attentions.

The customers rose, and gathered, somewhat menacingly, round the soldier, the host all the time roaring for help. But Kaspar, whose blood was up, dashing the host on the ground, set his foot on his chest, and then, releasing the hostess, drew his sword, and one circle in the air cleared the space before him.

He then, not without violent interruptions from the hostess, told his tale, and re-demanded his treasure. But the audience he appealed to was not favourable. The host was a man of note in the town, his brother was chief magistrate, he himself a burgomaster; most of those present were in his debt. The soldier was a stranger, and unsupported; his tale seemed improbable—a boot was an odd place wherein to deposit money. Besides, he had been very ill—he was probably still out of his mind; in short, whether or not his tale was disbelieved, the audience saw sufficient excuse to disbelieve it. Meanwhile, at a whisper from the hostess, one of the guests had disappeared at the commencement of his harangue. Before he had finished his tale there was a general clamour of incredulity and indignation, in the midst of which, by a violent effort, the host

wrenched himself from his unpleasing position, gained his legs, ran to the fire-place, seized on the spit; and encouraged by the sympathy he met with, and the numbers on his side, he ran a tilt at his accuser, calling him all the liars and vagabonds he could lay his tongue to. The soldier parried the spit, and with a backhanded stroke cut off the host's ear.

Amidst the hubbub that ensued in marched the host's brother, the magistrate, with a score of halberdiers in his suite. They found poor Kaspar flourishing his sword, the host bleeding and bellowing, the guests screaming and yelling and shaking their fists. Kaspar was soon disarmed and handcuffed, yet not before he had wounded one of the halberdiers, and flattened the chief magistrate's hat over his eyes by a stroke with the flat of his sword. It was evening ere peace and quiet were restored to the inn and the town. The soldier was cast into prison, and his trial appointed for the next day.

Prisons at that day were not the comfortable asylums for persecuted merit which they are in this. Formerly, innocent persons were the prisoners, and nothing could be worse than the accommodation;—at present a prisoner is generally guilty, and he is treated with every possible consideration.

It was literally a dungeon into which Kaspar Karnerach was thrown, under ground, in the old keep of the town. The stone walls steamed with damp, a litter of foul straw formed the bed, and a broken pitcher of ditchwater, with a parallelogram of black bread, formed the fare. Ill lodging and worse table for a man not recovered from an ague-fever! As day passed, and night advanced, poor Kaspar became extremely dejected; the excitement of anger, too violent for his physical strength, yielded to the reaction of utter despondency. He saw that he had no chance of justice—that his gold crowns were gone from him for ever. Where was the dot for his little Bettine?—where the sustenance for his old age? Nay, was it even

clear that either the blue eyes of Bettine, or old age itself—always desired, though always feared—were visions to be realized? A stranger in this accursed town, his despoiler a burgomaster, his despoiler's brother his judge, might it not go hard with his neck? He had maimed his host, he had wounded an officer of justice, he had flattened down the hat over the sacred head of the chief magistrate himself—offences less than which might justify the hanging of him. Deeper and deeper, darker and darker, grew the melancholy shade of his reflections.

Poor Kaspar Karnerach! That vision of thy little Bettine, which had so often cheered thee in thy hardships, consoled thee in the privations, roused thee in the dread of the battle, warmed thee amidst the snows of the bivouac—that vision now become to thee thy bitterest torture! Thou didst see her before thee, no longer blithe-eyed and laughing, running to meet thee at the threshhold, twining her small hands round thy neck, and renewing the light heart of thy youth with sweet kisses; not thus, but pale and sorrowing, an orphan,—dependent on the stranger for bread, doomed henceforth to harsh words and hard drudgery. And thou didst hear rude voices cry to her, "Up, lazy one, and work; for thy father, on whom we counted, is dead, and thy hands must earn thy bread." Lower and lower on his broad breast dropped the soldier's head—heavily, heavily. Tears gushed from his eyes. "And not a friend," he murmured, "not a friend to save me—no justice upon earth; and as to heaven, what right has a man of violence and strife to count on its aid—no help, no help!"

"Look up, Kaspar Karnerach," said a voice in his ear, "look up. Thou callest not in vain—I can deliver thee."

Startled, and scarce believing his ears, Kaspar looked up; and though, just before, the cell had been in profound darkness, he now perceived that a pale but steady light circled through the desolate space, a light like that of morning, while

before him stood a small figure, veiled from head to foot; but through the veil glowed, like balls of fire, two eyes fixed on his own.

The soldier sought to falter an ave, but his memory failed him, and the stranger continued—

"Kaspar Karnerach, without me, by this time to-morrow thou wilt be a corpse, and thy Bettine an orphan. While I speak, thy host is with his brother the judge. He has every reason, both of interest and vengeance, to urge thy death; he has stolen thy crowns, and thou hast cut off his ear. The judge is against thee, for thou hast assaulted him; the public are against thee, for thou art a stranger. There will be rare hooting around thy gallows-tree!"

"And who art thou?" asked Kaspar, trying to pluck up his courage; "and what share of my crowns dost thou ask for saving my life, and regaining the rest?"

"Not one," said the stranger.

"Wilt thou do it, then, from pure love of me?"

"From pure love of thee, certainly."

"Then all I can say," quoth the soldier, "is, that I thank thee heartily; and if ever thou hast need of me, in return, thou hast only to say, 'Up, Kaspar, I want thee.' "

"That quite satisfies me, if the contract is a little more formal. On my part, I undertake to obtain thy acquittal, to get thee back thy treasure, to send thee safe home to Bettine. On thine, thou hast but to declare that thou leavest to my disposal, now and for ever, what remains of thee after thy death."

"No," said the soldier, "that goes to Bettine, I cannot make thee my heir."

"Fool," replied the stranger, "I do not seek to despoil thy daughter. I ask only that which thou canst not leave to her nor to earth; in a word, that invisible and abstract essence of which in life thou hast made precious little use; and which the

scholars will tell thee to look for in a part of thy cranium which thou hast never heard of; in a word, what remains of thee after life—thy soul!"

"Ha!" said the soldier, recoiling with a shudder. "Then thou art the tempter against whom the priests warn us. Avaunt, Satan! get thee behind me—I spurn and spit upon thee."

"Tut," said the stranger, calmly, "If I were not fond of doing things in a legal and business-like manner, I should leave thee to hang; sure that I shall have thee all the same, with bond or without. Hast thou not committed sins enough to mortgage a score of souls more precious than thine? Reflect, since the age of seventeen to forty-eight hast thou not been engaged in bloodshed and rapine? Recollect all the throats thou hast cut, the towns thou hast fired, the houses thou hast sacked."

"In the fair way of my trade as a soldier," said Kaspar; "my captain must pay for me if I am wrong—go to him."

"And is it thy captain who is to blame for that little affair in Moldavia, when thou didst rifle three monks and their abbot, and didst get drunk upon the risdalers of the church? Is thy captain to blame for that stab in the dark thou gavest, twenty years ago, to thy rival, for an innocent kiss to the mother of Bettine? or for the share thou hadst but last winter in stopping the fat beeves that belonged to the holy convent of Iggulstadt? Murder and sacrilege, pretty trifles, I trow! Add to these, all the prayers thou hast forgotten; the promises thou hast never fulfilled; the rosaries thou hast not counted; the sackcloth thou hast not worn; the stripes thou hast not inflicted upon a hide tough enough, by my hoofs, to have borne them unflinching. Recall thy drinkings and thy gamblings, thy quarrels and thy leasings, thine oaths and thy cheats. Let them pass before thee one by one, while I speak—Ho, soldier; ho, sinner; dost thou think that if thou diest to-morrow, thy soul can escape me?"

While the tempter thus said, a gloom of intense horror and

despair settled upon the mind of poor Kaspar Karnerach. Verily and indeed, one by one, all his sins rose before him like visible things; the dread phantasmagoria of the past succeeded each other like shapes in the magic lantern.

The demon continued, "Well, Kaspar, is the bargain so hard? —am I as bad as they paint me? Do I not offer thee terms too advantageous for a rascal like thee to reject? Instead of dying to-morrow, thou shalt live out thy natural term, peaceful and merry. I will not claim thee these forty years. Thou shalt be fourscore and eight before I tap at thy door. Perhaps thou doubtest still that thy sentence will pass. Look, and listen."

And straight the walls of the dungeon receded, and Kaspar saw the judge and the inn-keeper closeted together, and heard the judge say distinctly, "Set thy mind at ease, brother mine, it shall be more than an ear for an ear. The cursed soldier shall hang on the linden before thy door, and the crows shall pick out his eyes."

To the orbs thus unfeelingly menaced Kaspar clapped his hands in dismay, and the vision was gone. His despair was too great for his courage, much as that had been proved.

"Well," said he, at last, "before I can decide, I ask one condition at least. You can conjure the absent before me, it seems. Let me see Bettine once more—just as she is now—let me fancy I kiss her in sleep."

The demon interrupted the father with a laugh full of irony and scorn. He represented the absurdity of such a sentiment in a rogue so abandoned. He argued and sneered; he pooh-poohed, and tut-tutted. But the soldier was naturally obstinate, and he grew the more dogged to insist, the more the fiend was reluctant to concede. At last, evidently seeing that unless he complied he should lose all the advantage he had gained, the tempter, with considerable repugnance, yielded the point. "But mark," said he, "it can be but the hundredth part of a

moment! See this nail that I draw from thy morion. Only for the space of time that elapses while the nail drops from my hand to the floor, canst thou see thy Bettine. Look thy best."

The soldier looked; Bettine was before him; the little room at the forge; the small bed at the corner; the crucifix hung at the bed-head. Bettine's sweet face was pale and disturbed; some dream scared or distressed her; and her lips plainly syllabled the words—"Father, God save thee!" Then the soldier's soul seemed to make itself palpable and felt within him; it seemed to flutter and writhe in agony—to appeal to heaven against the base fears of the body, by which its divine essence was so mercilessly endangered. Its voice became audible; as a frightened child on the breast of its mother, it wailed for succour and deliverance. All those phantoms of past sins, so lately terrific, lost their power of despair. Beside the doom of an eternity, how small seemed the misdeeds of hours! Suddenly—as the form of a giant angel, its feet on the earth, its brow encircled by the glory of the loftiest stars—rose HOPE. "Son," said the angel, "whom I have reared from the cradle, wilt thou desert me at the gates of the tomb? Not till the tomb is closed, canst thou know me as I am! All my beauty—all my power—are never shown but in the land beyond the grave. Do thy sins dismay thee? I was created to rescue men from sin. Nor guilt nor demon has lasting authority on the soul while it clings to the garments of Hope."

The voice died—the dream faded. Before the soldier stood the tempter, and the nail had not yet reached to the floor.

"Fiend!" said the man delivered, "if in the hundredth part of a moment the soul escaped from the body can feel as mine has felt, what must be eternity? Avaunt, and let me die! I will take God's judgment on my sins; and to God's mercy I will trust my child." So speaking, the soldier made the sign of the cross, and the tempter vanished.

* * * * * * * *

It was with a composed and cheerful mind that Kaspar Karnerach saw the day gleam through his bars. Long before noon, the whole burgh was astir; and, accompanied by a file of halberdiers, Karnerach was led into court to take his trial.

The judge was in the awful seat; the host, with his head bandaged, the halberdier whom Kaspar had wounded, and a goodly crowd of witnesses were assembled, intent upon supplying the mob with that most popular of all sights—a man hanged.

Just as Kaspar was being led to the bar, he felt his arm pinched, and an unfamiliar voice whispered in his ear—"Say that you leave your defence in the hands of your counsel."

Kaspar looked round, and saw before him a little man with a sharp hungry face, and eyes that seemed keen enough to pierce through a wall.

"Alas!" said the soldier, "I have not now wherewithal in my pouch for a fee for counsel."

"Never let that vex you," said the little man, smiling. "I will run the chance to take my costs out of the plaintiff. If I miss here, I hit there; that's my maxim."

Before Kaspar could answer, the man had vanished amongst the crowd. The soldier rubbed his eyes, and fancied himself dreaming. He was now placed at the bar; all eyes glared malevolently on him; silence was proclaimed; and the case was opened.The host showed the place where an ear had once been; told a moving tale of the kindness himself and wife had shown to the soldier; enlarged on the villainy of Kaspar's trumped-up tale of the money in the boot and his shameless trick of extortion; foiled of swindling his benefactor, he had then attempted to murder him. The hostess confirmed the tale; the witnesses proved the violence of the blood-thirsty soldier, the halberdiers deposed as to his armed resistance of justice; and the magistrate, shaking his head, and groaning ominously, asked Kaspar Karnerach what he had to say why sentence of death should not be passed against him.

Poor Kaspar gasped, and looked round; and, involuntarily, and as if the speech were not his own, mumbled out that he would leave his defence in the hands of his counsel.

"And here I am!" cried a shrill voice; and a personage not hitherto perceived, but robed in the official gown of a counsellor of the High Court of the Marquisate of Brandebourg, bustled up to the table.

At the sight of this unexpected assistance, the host's face fell, and the judge looked confused; for the counsellors of the High Court were very formidable gentry in that little town; and a man who could command the services of one of that learned and important fraternity was not to be put to death quite so easily as our host had reckoned upon. Meanwhile the lawyer began with exceeding volubility. He sketched a short outline of Kaspar's birth, services, and career; and, to Karnerach's great astonishment, this was done with the most accurate fidelity, except that only all the good was told, and all the bad was omitted. Those peccadilloes, the review of which had so dismayed the soldier in his dungeon, were carefully suppressed, and in their stead appeared actions of valour and devotion—charity and goodness. The poor soldier could have wept to hear himself so touchingly described. The lawyer's eloquence began wonderfully to move and interest the audience, against their will. And when the lawyer diverged to narrate how he, Kaspar Karnerach, had once saved the life of the Marquis of Brandebourg himself, the loyalty of the court could scarcely be restrained from acclamations of applause. The lawyer proceeded to explain exactly how the soldier had acquired his crown pieces; how he had carefully saved them; how he had refrained from wassail and gaming, and turned miser, for the sake of his child; how he had counted on the portion to his little Bettine—a portion won by bold deeds and honourable wounds; how he had retired from service with a eulogy from his captain at the

head of his troops; how all his old comrades thronged round him to bid "farewell and God speed him;" how he had sewn up his gains in his boot; how he had been taken ill on the road; how he had reached the inn; and how he had entrusted his treasure to the care of his hostess. "And as for you, poor woman," exclaimed the advocate, abruptly, turning to the landlady—"as for you—why should I blame you?—women are but the tools of their husbands, and you are punished enough. Ah! little thought you that one of those gold crowns was this very morning given to Gretchen, your maid, for a kiss behind the door, while you were lacing your boddice."

"Thou villain!" exclaimed the hostess, shaking her fist at her husband, who stood open-mouthed and aghast.

"Ay!" continued the lawyer, "nor did you dream that that precious spouse of your own promised Gretchen to run away from you, and live with her as his wife;—supporting the hussy on those very gold crowns for which you perilled your life and lost your honesty! Come, now, would you do it again, my good frau?"

"No, and in troth!" cried the hostess, rushing to her husband. "And is this my return, you good-for-nothing perjured deceiver!"

"Such a fine woman as you, too!" sighed the lawyer; "and such a minx for your rival! Well, at least you see that stolen goods do not prosper!"

"But I will have my revenge!" cried the hostess, reading her husband's guilt in his face. "And if I did take the poor soldier's money, you know it was because you commanded me, vile slave that I was!"

"Hush! hush!" groaned the host.

"You hear her?" said the lawyer, triumphantly. "But one is as good as the other—courage, mine host! If you meant to run away with your Gretchen, your wife had promised little Her-

man, the barber, to rob you, next Thursday, and set off with him to open a shop at Cologne!"

"Ah, wretch," cried the host, enraged in his turn. "I suspected as much; and that's the reason"—he stopped short.

"That's the reason you sewed the rix-dollars and gold crowns up in your doublet! see"—and before the host was aware, the lawyer had stepped up to him, and with a touch of a knife he drew forth, unripped the doublet, and the coins came clattering down on the ground!

No words can describe the excitement that ensued at this exposure. But the judge, alone retaining his presence of mind, and anxious yet to bring off his brother, cried "Silence!" and as soon as the hubbub subsided—"Worthy counsellor," said he, "it is not on mere appearances that we can judge a worthy man like the plaintiff, whom you have contrived so strangely to turn into defendant. If it be true, as you state, that this bad woman wanted to elope from her husband, and from motives of jealousy or revenge to ruin him, how do we know but what all this has been a trick between you both—how else could you have arrived at the knowledge of things done between the closed doors of men's homes? Doubtless the woman took the money herself, and sewed it up in the doublet unknown to her husband. Is it not so, my brother?"

"Ah, ah,—ho, ho," said the lawyer, "let your brother speak for himself;" and as he said this, the lawyer threw back his gown,—his form seemed to dilate—taller and taller, larger and larger he grew, as he stood close by the landlord.

"Well then," cried the host, plucking up courage, and hoping still by the judge's connivance to be brought out from the perilous dilemma into which he had fallen, "well then, devil fly away with me, if I know how the crowns got into the doublet!"

"That is all that I wanted and waited for!" cried the lawyer,

"miss here—hit there;" and he pounced on the host like a hawk on a sparrow. UP flew the roof of the court—sky and cloud peered within—and high into air, out of sight, flew the fiend and his victim.

Such is the true history of Kaspar Karnerach, his host, and his boot, as it is told in the 4th book *De Praestigiis Daemonum*, c. 20, and corroborated by the illustrious and unimpeachable testimony of Paul Eitzen, 6th sect. *de ses morales*, conveying the notable and comfortable truth, "that the devil himself can be a friend at a pinch, provided your soul is your own and your case is a good one."

As for little Bettine, her descendants still live at Heilbronn, and you may see in their possession the identical boot so celebrated in the ancient records of the Marquisate of Brandebourg. The crowns, to be sure, are all gone. Their loss is easily accounted for, since the good success of Kaspar's trial had given the family a taste for litigation; and somehow or other they never found a lawyer who let them off as cheap as the devil!

# Diamonds

## *A Story of Wealth*

*By* W. S. Gilbert

From *Routledge's Christmas Annual*, 1867

# W. S. Gilbert

Sir William Schwenk Gilbert (1836-1911), *it may surprise some to learn, wrote a number of short stories as well as the famous comic operas, the* Bab Ballads, *and miscellaneous humorous verse. The brilliant career which made him the most famous English dramatist of his century began slowly, and it was only after experiment in various forms that the author found his metier. "Diamonds" bears too obvious marks of the apprentice hand, though Gilbert was thirty-one at the time. Its chief weakness, a clumsy and "Victorian" dénouement, shows the author stumbling over the object that tripped up so many of his contemporaries—the plot. Notice how far superior is Chapter One to the rest of the story. The easy, realistic style, full of racy commentary on people and things, dissipates immediately before the exigencies of plot construction. In essence "Diamonds" is a grave, almost tristful story, wrenched from tragedy only by last-minute theatrics. That there is only in the first chapter a glimpse of Gilbert's sly humor is another proof, if one be necessary, of the tenacity of literary tradition. When a few years later he began the felicitous collaborations with Arthur Sullivan, there were no conventions to impinge on the gaiety of his fancy,—with what results every literate person knows.*

# Diamonds

I AM SORRY to have to begin a tale, which is really not intended to be objectionably squalid, in a public house. It is an unpromising opening, and one that is calculated to alienate the good opinion of a large section of readers, but I am not sure but that, after all, it has some artistic merit. It may be taken to stand to the coming chapters, in the relation that the opening scene in a pantomime does to the impossible glories that are to follow: it serves as a foil to them, and their effect is heightened by contrast with the dismal horrors which have preceded them. Please be good enough to suppose, for the moment, that the "Jolly Super" theatrical house of call is The Abode of the Demon Alcohol, and that the pretty but supercilious barmaid is a carnal embodiment of his familiar, the malignant Djin; raise the curtain to the air of "The Roast Beef of Old England," encourage the fiction that the conversation is spoken through the levelling medium of a pantomime mask, and all will be well. I promise you that there are bright fairies, pretty shepherdesses, princes with black hair, and big-headed monarchs, waiting at the wing for their cue to come on; and you must not quarrel with me if I avail myself of my privilege to delay their appearance until the progress of the plot demands it.

The "Jolly Super" is a dingy public-house in the immediate neighbourhood of the Theatre Royal Parnassus, and derives its main support from the custom of the "Parnassus" company, and that of their friends and admirers. Its name would suggest that the establishment appeals exclusively to the sympathies of the humbler members of the theatrical profession,

but this is not, in point of fact, the case; indeed, a standing rule of the house, tacitly acquiesced in by all concerned, makes it a breach of etiquette for any member of a dramatic company to enter the private bar, unless his theatrical status entitle him to avail himself of the green-room of his theatre—a privilege accorded at the Parnassus to those members only whose salary amounted to a minimum of thirty shillings a week.

Besides the Parnassus company, the "Jolly Super" is much affected by members of a neighbouring Literary Club, known to themselves and to the publishing world as the "Aged Pilgrims." The "Aged Pilgrims" are (as their name implies) a collection of young and middle-aged dramatic authors, novelists, reviewers, magazine writers, actors, "entertainers," and literary barristers. As a rule, the "Aged Pilgrims" are appreciated by the publishing world alone, and utterly unknown to the rest of society. They are, for the most part, clever fellows, but their cleverness is expended, mainly, upon anonymous magazine articles and daily newspaper work; so, if it should happen that any members of the "Aged Pilgrims" whom I may have occasion to introduce to you in the course of this story are not already known to you by name, you must not entertain a poor opinion of them on that account. You read all the novels that Mr. Mudie sends you, you know the peculiarities of their several authors, and you therefore suppose that you are acquainted with the name of every literary man, of any talent, in England. But you never were more mistaken in the whole course of your existence. Who, do you suppose, writes the leading articles and reviews in the morning and weekly papers and in the monthly magazines? Men, my good friends, of whom, twenty chances to one, you have never heard, unless you are behind the scenes in these matters. Men with clear logical brains, and great literary ability; keen satirists, pleasant humourists, but men whose names, with, perhaps, half-a-dozen exceptions, are totally un-

known to you. They are men who have devoted themselves to anonymous literature; and to the world at large they are as distinct from their writings as the Punch-and-Judy man is from the puppets he works. You get your *Times* every morning with your hot rolls; you read the leaders from beginning to end, but you would as soon think of setting yourself the task of finding out the names of the men who wrote them as of seeking an introduction to a peripatetic showman, because you have derived some whimsical amusement from his wooden dolls. So I warn you beforehand, that if you expect to find many notabilities among the "Aged Pilgrims," you will be disappointed. But take my word for it that they are mostly clever fellows, that they may all be termed good fellows, if you have no objection to place a liberal construction on the words; and that whenever an "Aged Pilgrim" falls sick, and is thereby prevented from earning his weekly income, he has no occasion to appeal to his brother Pilgrims for assistance, for assistance is volunteered with a liberality which only those who know how hardly the dole of a literary hack is earned can appreciate. I am bound, in justice, to admit, that good fellows as they are, they have for the most part a reprehensible yearning for bar-parlours, long clays, and spittoons; but you must bear in mind that I prayed you to understand the term "good fellow" in its most liberal sense.

Of these "good fellows" one of the best was Ralph Warren—a tall, fair-haired young fellow, with a clever but not a strictly handsome face; indeed, if the truth must be spoken, his appearance spoke much too plainly of extremely irregular hours, and extremely regular brandies-and-sodas, to justify any very complimentary remarks on that score. I am sorry to add that his clothes were rather mildewy, and his boots a trifle lop-sided; his linen, however, was clean, and so were his face and hands. I hardly know how to reconcile the term "gentlemanly" with

this rather unpromising description, but there certainly was an air of easy frankness about Ralph Warren—a genial gentlemanly *bonhomie*, combined with a suggestion of quiet, conscious power, that induced you to forget his seediness and his sodas-and-brandy, and to dub him "gentleman" before you had enjoyed five minutes of his conversation.

In point of fact, Warren was a gentleman by birth and education. His father, Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Guy Warren, was the second son of Lord Singleton, an extremely wealthy but eccentric nobleman, who quarreled on principle with every member of his family, except his heir-apparent or presumptive for the time being. Lord Singleton had turned Ralph's father into the world at the age of sixteen, with an ensign's commission in a marching regiment and a hundred a year, coming to an unavowed determination to avail himself of the earliest opportunity that should arise of quarrelling with this unfortunate young officer, and of forbidding him the house, as a natural consequence. The opportunity soon arose. Guy "went wrong" in the matter of debts before he had been six months with his regiment; his father paid the score without a murmur; intimated to Guy that he would not be cheerfully received at Singleton any more; and, indeed, determined to hold no further converse with him at any time, unless it should unfortunately happen that his elder brother, Spencer, were to die childless, in which case Guy, as the heir for the time being, would come in for all the gratifying consideration which, until the occurrence of that unlikely contingency, would be the hereditary right of his fortunate elder brother. At the same time Lord Singleton did not disguise from himself the bare possibility of such a complication taking place, and so, with the view of keeping Guy well before his eyes, so that he might be able to lay his hands upon him whenever he might happen to want him, he privately advanced that young officer's inter-

ests at the Horse Guards, and, indeed, went so far on one occasion as to pay the purchase-money for his captain's commission.

The old lord, however, was much too knowing a hand to do this good deed in his own name, and so lay himself open to the supposition of being accessible to the claims of impecunious kinsmen; he did it through a confidential valet, who, in the assumed character of a benevolent money-lender, called on Guy and offered to accommodate him with the necessary amount at insignificant interest, for any period he might choose to name, on his (Guy's) personal assurance that the money should be repaid as soon as Guy should find it convenient to do so. Of course the seedy lieutenant closed with the benevolent money-lender on the spot—the loan was there and then effected, and Guy sang the worthy usurer's praises to such effect among his brother officers and their friends, that that excellent person was embarrassed with innumerable applications from these straightened gentry for the loan of fabulous sums on the same security that Guy had given for the loan of the purchase-money for his captain's commission. It is, perhaps, hardly needful to add, that Lord Singleton's valet found it necessary to decline all the proposed negotiations.

It will not surprise the worldly-minded reader to hear that the treatment that Guy experienced at the hands of his ungenial parent contributed to sour that officer's mind against his own offspring generally and against his second son, Ralph, in particular. Guy retired from the army on captain's half-pay, and although he rose on the half-pay list to a lieutenant-colonel's commission, this accession of dignity contributed in no way to increase his income. He married a young lady with five hundred a year of her own, and this, with his captain's half-pay, formed the bulk of his income. The lieutenant-colonel lived, all the year round, at a cheap watering-place, with his

wife and eldest son, a hopeless cripple; and when he had procured for Ralph a clerkship in a bad Government office, he considered that he had done his duty by the boy, and left him to shift for himself in London.

Ralph's method of shifting for himself was, at first, a failure. He took cheap rooms with a brother clerk in Islington, attended at his office, and did his work in a slip-slop way during the day, dined flashily and unwholesomely at a cheap but showy eating-house afterwards, spent his evening usually at one of the theatres or at Cremorne, knocked about at cheap places of disreputable resort, went to bed at two in the morning, not tipsy, but yet having drank freely and unwholesomely, and woke up the next day with a hot head, a feverish pulse, and a mouth parched with cheap hot cigars. He got into debt with the money-lenders who infest Government offices, and was generally admitted by all who knew him to be going directly and unmistakably to the bad.

But Ralph was not a cad by instinct. A reaction set in, and although his life was anything but a spotless one from that moment, it was an immense improvement upon what it had been. He was a smart, clever fellow, with a natural turn for epigram and satire, and he began to turn these dangerous qualities to good effect in the columns of better-class periodicals. He began humbly and anonymously in obscure journals, but he obtained a certain measure of success in these, and this success induced him to aspire to greater things. He became, in course of time, a regular contributor to a weekly paper, and an occasional one to most of the monthly magazines. By degrees his income from these sources increased to such an extent as to justify him in throwing up his appointment in his seedy Government office, and taking to literature as his sole means of support. He joined the "Aged Pilgrims," with whom his smart, showy, conversational powers and irrepressible good humour

made him an immense favourite. He had belonged to their brotherhood for about two years at the date of his introduction to the reader. I again apologize for bringing him into notice amid the unpolite surroundings of a theatrical house of call, but as, unfortunately, the "Jolly Super" was the place where Ralph Warren was generally to be found, as it was here that he, in company with other Aged Pilgrims, usually dined, always wrote his articles, and generally spent his evenings, it will be seen that I have an excuse for so doing. After all, he was more to be pitied than blamed. If he had had only an opportunity of making himself at home with three or four decent families of regular habits and with pretty daughters in them, he would have been as much disgusted with this Bohemian life as you yourself are. But this opportunity had never been offered to him, and so he stuck to his Bohemianism as the only form of life which was open to him.

Ralph was sitting in the club-room of the "Aged Pilgrims," on the first-floor of the "Jolly Super," with half-a-dozen other members of that sociable brotherhood. They were not particularly jolly at that moment, for news had just arrived of the failure of a new speculative magazine in which they were all interested, and of the bankruptcy of the proprietor. Poor Warren was especially down in the mouth, as he had been sent down to Sheffield by the editor with instructions to remain a fortnight, and to "do" a chatty descriptive account of all the manufactures of that cheerless city for the magazine in question. By way of rider to his instructions, he was told to make himself as jolly as circumstances would permit, and not on any account to spare any expense. He had acted fully upon these hints—he had taken pains with the articles, he had spared no expense whatever, and he was anxiously expecting a cheque for a hundred and twenty-five pounds (seventy-five pounds for the papers, and fifty for his hotel bill and travelling ex-

penses), when the news of the collapse of the whole thing arrived. They were endeavouring to restore the balance of their equanimity with their customary panacea—brandy-and-soda; but whether it was that brandy-and-soda as a remedy did not apply to losses above five pounds, or whether the irrepressible good humour and aggravating jollity of Sam Travers (the low comedian of the Parnassus), who had that day signed an engagement for the next season at an increase of five pounds a week to his salary, operated as a damper with which it was impossible to contend, I don't know, but certainly the conversation flagged to an extent almost unknown among the "Aged Pilgrims."

"They say," said one of them, "that there won't be a penny in the pound. The whole thing is mortgaged to the paper-makers."

"Hang the paper-makers!" prayed another, while the rest chorused in "Amen!"

"Thirty pounds a month for 'Gnats and Camels,' till it ran through, I was to have had."

"Well, you'll get it off your hands in some other paper."

"Devil a bit; it was written to order—written up to some confounded blocks that the beggar bought wholesale of Flicker and Dowse before they went to smash."

"How much do you put your claim at, Ralph?"

"A hundred and twenty-five, and cheap enough, too, for a fortnight in Sheffield."

"It'll be all right, my boys," said Travers. "Never say die! Down one moment—up the next! Look at me—I began as call-boy and sub-deputy assistant property-man, at eight-and-sixpence a week, and I've just signed an engagement for five-and-thirty pound. It'll be your turn next. Lor' bless you, it isn't half such a bad world as people think! The devil isn't half as black as he's painted!"

"Nor speculating publishers half as white as they're whitewashed," said Ralph. "Oh, come in; don't stand knocking there."

The door opened, and a waiter put a letter into Ralph's hand. A lawyer's letter—blue paper and a red criss-crossed wafer. At any other time Ralph would have kept it to stick, unopened, upon his mantelpiece, where it would have remained for months, while he and his friends amused themselves with lively conjectures as to its contents. But matters were getting serious, and he opened it with a solemn face.

"13, Lincoln's Inn Fields, Feb. 4, 1860.

"Sir,—We regret to inform you that intelligence has just reached us of the death of the Right Hon. Baron Singleton and his eldest son, the Honourable Hugh Warren, who were unfortunately drowned by the sudden capsizing of a yacht off Selsey Bill. We are instructed by your father, the present Baron Singleton, to communicate to you his desire that you should join him at Singleton without any delay.

"We are instructed that you are at liberty to draw upon us to the amount of £100 (one hundred pounds) to defray your necessary expenses.—We have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servants,

"Wardle and Tapp.

"To the Hon. Ralph Warren,
'The Jolly Super,' Bedfourdbury."

## Chapter II.—*Little Woman*

Ralph Warren rose and left his companions without a word. He walked moodily downstairs, paid his score, and strolled into the street. It was some time before he could quite realize his position. The whole thing was so sudden—so wholesale—the unexpected change in his prospects was so overwhelming, that he had to repeat the contents of the letter several times to himself before he could realize them. He walked up and down Covent Garden for nearly an hour, and after he had read and re-read the astounding letter three or four dozen times, he began to realize the fact that instead of drudging wearily and ob-

scurely at half-paid author-work, he was to be suddenly removed to an almost brilliant position, with the probable command of what appeared to him to be unlimited wealth, and an almost certain prospect of a peerage; for his elder brother, the cripple, to whom allusion has already been made, would certainly never marry, and indeed was scarcely likely to live many years.

He put his hand into his breast pocket to open and read for the fiftieth time the communication which had so agitated him, and he drew forth by mistake a poor humble little letter addressed to him in a girlish hand. It reminded him that he had that evening promised to meet one Mary Vyner at Oxford Circus, at eight o'clock. It then wanted but twenty minutes to eight, so he went into the Strand and mounted an omnibus which would take him past the spot.

It's a dreadful thing to confess, but Mary Vyner was a milliner's assistant in Vigo Street, Regent Street. I am afraid I must add that Ralph Warren had never been properly introduced to her; and while I am about it, I may as well admit that he was in the habit of meeting her about twice a week, in the evening, too, at eight o'clock, and of taking her to a theatre (he was on the free list everywhere) or some other place of amusement, where they beguiled the time until eleven, when Mary Vyner had to report herself in Vigo Street. This is all very shocking indeed, and quite indefensible, and, indeed, the only thing that anybody could find to say in palliation of its atrocity was, that Mary Vyner was, on the whole, a very good little girl, that Ralph Warren, although a free liver, was not an utterly unconscientious scamp, and that although they had known each other for about two years, no harm had ever come, or was ever likely to come, of their meetings. I don't mean to say that Mary Vyner was altogether a perfect character; she was rather thoughtless, rather too fond of admiration perhaps,

and certainly imprudent in allowing Ralph Warren to meet her, time after time, without ascertaining how he proposed that these meetings should end. But notwithstanding this, Mary Vyner was a quiet, modest, ladylike girl, whose greatest fault was an absolute devotion to, and an overwhelming belief in, the merits of the rather graceless young gentleman who was then on his way to meet her. She had learnt to love him with all the fervour that her blind little heart was capable of; and if he did not reciprocate her attachment to its full extent, he was still a great deal too fond of Mary Vyner to do her any deliberate wrong. So these heedless young people met, and met, and met again, and beyond the fact that it was very shocking and highly improper, no harm whatever had hitherto come of it.

Ralph Warren was in some perplexity. He hardly knew how to break the important news to Mary Vyner, and still less did he know how to act with reference to her, now that his position was so materially altered.

"Mary," said he, when they met, "I've good and bad news. My grandfather is dead."

Mary had never heard of his having a grandfather, for Warren had purposely kept the aristocratic features of his family history a secret from her. However, he didn't seem very much distressed, and Mary condoled with him in the usual form. She was so matter-of-fact as to wind up by asking Singleton whether his position would be at all improved by it.

"Very considerably. He was Lord Singleton, and my father was his second son."

"Lord Singleton! Then there is only one between your father and the title?"

"There is not one. My father's elder brother died with my grandfather, and my father takes the peerage."

"Your father Lord Singleton? Oh, Ralph, you never told me this!"

"Why should I? It would have frightened you away from me."

"It would. Oh, Ralph, you won't leave me—say you won't leave me! Promise me that!" said poor little Mary, her eyes full of tears.

"I must leave you for a short time to go to Singleton—my father's place; but—I will return."

They walked on in silence. It was pretty evident that they would "assist" at no theatre that night. "Ralph," said she, after a pause, "you may go away from me if you like, and I will never, never follow you or trouble you again. I have loved you, oh, so much, so much! and I think I shall never be happy again if you go; but do go, dear Ralph, if you think it best. I shall be dreadfully sad and dull at first—oh!" (bursting into tears) "how sad and dull I shall be!"

"Little Woman!" said Ralph, placing her hand in his (it was quite dark), "don't cry so terribly. Come into the Park, and we will talk it over."

I am afraid that when Ralph went to meet Mary Vyner that night, he had made up his mind that that meeting must be their last. But the Little Woman's sobs had moved him, and he felt that the tie between them was not to be so easily broken.

"Listen," said he, impulsively, but yet with a quiet force that astonished him, "I never openly told you that I loved you because I never thought—well I didn't expect to be ever able to marry any one. But if you will have me, Little Woman, now that my prospects are brighter—if you will take me with all my faults, as I am—we will be married, privately, as soon as the affairs connected with my grandfather's and uncle's deaths are settled." They stood still. Little Woman laid her fair young face against his strong chest, and he, bending his head, kissed the big brown eyes that looked up so trustfully into his own.

And this was the plighting of Ralph Warren to Mary Vyner.

### Chapter III.—*Lady Julia and Her Rival*

Ralph Warren went down to join his father at Singleton the next day. The meeting of the two was curious enough. Lord Singleton had neither seen nor heard from Ralph since that erratic young man left his government appointment to seek his bread as a journalist. As Lord Singleton's father had "discharged" him on the first occasion of his running counter to his will, so did he discharge *his* son. It was a part of the family code, supported by many precedents, that erring second sons should be discarded at the first opportunity, until some important family convulsion rendered it necessary that they should be forgiven. The death of the old lord and his eldest son, and the consequent succession of Colonel Warren to the peerage, was an event of sufficient importance to bring father and son together again. They were extremely gentlemanly, and, indeed, courteous to one another at first, but this dignified state of things at length relapsed into a mere cold toleration of one another's presence. The health of the poor crippled elder son was failing fast, and it soon became evident that the ex-journalist would in all probability succeed to the style, title, and estates of Lord Singleton.

So it became necessary that he should marry, and marry well, and the lady selected for him by his father was that haughty, imperious beauty, Lady Julia Domner, the only daughter of the Earl of Sangazure, K.G., Lord-Lieutenant of the County, and Honorary Colonel of the Turniptopshire Yeomanry.

If I have conveyed the impression (and I am afraid I have) that all this was arranged the day after Ralph's arrival at Singleton, I must stop to correct it. It was the work of fifteen months. I should like to have conveyed some notion of that interval of time by expatiating at considerable length upon the

demeanour of Lord Singleton and his son on stepping suddenly from the gloom of almost penniless obscurity into the full blaze of nobility, wealth, and county distinction. I should like to have told how the new lord made himself utterly ridiculous at first, how, by slow degrees, he arrived at something like a proper appreciation of the form of conduct which was expected of him, and how eventually he subsided into a fairly respectable type of a wealthy but rather foolish county swell. I should like to show how Ralph also made all sorts of blunders at first, more particularly in the matter of field sports and other county amusements, with which he was of course wholly unfamiliar. However, he had more of the natural gentleman about him than his father, and at the dinner-table or in the drawing-room his behaviour was unexceptionable. I should also like to have shown how, at first, he corresponded regularly (though secretly) with Mary Vyner—how Little Woman's eyes gradually, though surely, opened to the fact that Ralph was slowly "getting out of it;" how she bore his faithlessness at first with a sham pride which did not sit at all comfortably on her homely little shoulders, and how the sham pride eventually broke down and left her as weeping, heart-broken, deserted, and hopeless a Little Woman as any in wide London. But there are other matters more immediately to the point, and I must not run on too long.

Lady Julia Domner was, as I have said, a cold, imperious beauty. Her father was an impoverished peer, who hoped, by an alliance with the wealthy Warrens, to secure a becoming position for his only daughter. Lord Singleton saw, clearly enough, that his country position would stand all the more strongly for the shoring up that it would derive from an alliance with Lord Sangazure's family. Ralph, completely cut off from his old associates, and anxious to gain a good footing in his new position, didn't much care whom he married, so that that end was obtained. So the marriage was determined upon, and all parties were satisfied.

In justice to Ralph, I must admit that his desertion of poor Mary Vyner was not unattended by some serious qualms of conscience. He thought often and often of the poor little girl, read over and over again the long touching letters that she wrote upon its becoming evident to her that he was casting her off. But a sense that a public acknowledgment of her as his wife was out of the question, and moreover that he had gone too far with Lady Julia to render it possible that he could break it off with her without bringing himself into public contempt, reconciled him, to some extent, to the course of conduct he was pursuing.

He was not happy in his courtship of Lady Julia. He had always preferred the pretty to the magnificent, and her little brother's plump governess was very much more to his mind. Lady Julia began by treating him rather coldly, but she was a clever and intensely appreciative woman, and the singular charm of Ralph's conversation eventually exercised an extraordinary fascination over her. She began by rather disliking him than otherwise—she ended by loving him with as much devotion as her cold, undemonstrative nature was capable of.

The first novelty of the thing over, Ralph found that the fetters of a formal engagement bored him fearfully. The eternal rides and drives—always with the same companions; the eternal congratulations—always in the same form of words; the eternal evenings at Lord Sangazure's, each a *replica* of its predecessor, came to be looked upon by him with a feeling little short of aversion. He contrived to maintain an outward semblance of affection; but it was a hollow sham, and he knew it. His uneasiness was aggravated from time to time by receiving, at long intervals, letters from Little Woman, written in passionate bursts of grief, imploring him to send her some sign, if it was but a glove that he had worn. But Ralph could never make up his mind to open them—he kissed them and tore them up as they were.

He was altogether in a very unsatisfactory state of mind. He endeavoured at one time to revive the old happy Bohemian days by inviting Dick Pender, who wrote sporting novels, and two or three other "Aged Pilgrims," down to Singleton, but the scheme failed. Dick Pender was worth nothing on horseback, and the others spent the whole day in the billiard-room, and the evenings passed in a sort of genteel martyrdom on the drawing-room ottomans, listening to vapid county politics and stable talk, of which they understood never one word. Dick Pender made many notes on sporting subjects, of which he eventually made profitable use, but the others gained neither profit nor pleasure by the visit, and it was never repeated.

To return to Mary Vyner. The Little Woman fell dangerously sick shortly after her discovery of Ralph's faithlessness, and it became necessary that she should have country air; so she spent six months with her only relation, an uncle, who farmed a considerable number of acres in South Wales. She never breathed to any one the real cause of her illness, and when at length she recovered, and returned to Vigo Street to her work, it was supposed by her companions that her attachment to Ralph Warren was a thing altogether of the past, and her quiet, subdued demeanour was ascribed by them to the effect of the serious illness from which she had barely recovered. But Little Woman's thoughts still ran on the clever scapegrace who had left her. She made all sorts of excuses to herself for his desertion, and hoped and prayed that a day would come when he would return to her. It was silly enough in Little Woman to think such a thing possible, but in her seclusion in South Wales she had not heard of his engagement, and for aught she knew, he might be out of England, and so her letters might not have reached him.

But the young ladies at the establishment in Vigo Street subscribed to take in the *Times*, and in the columns of that

paper she read one day that the alliance between the Hon. Ralph Warren and Lady Julia Domner, which had for some time been in contemplation, was definitely fixed to take place at Sangazure Hall, her father's seat, on the 15th of the ensuing month, and that the festivities on that occasion were to be on a scale of surpassing splendour.

She was an impulsive little girl. She only waited to get leave of absence from the Lady Superior, and off she started to Singleton. With a beating heart she inquired for Ralph, and was told that he had just left unexpectedly for the Continent, and it was not known when he would return. She then asked the way to Sangazure Hall, and finding that it was six miles distant, she hired a trap at the inn, and drove there as fast as she could induce the flyman to take her.

At Sangazure she learnt that Lady Julia Domner was very unwell, and unable to see any one, but on sending a message to the effect that her business was of the deepest importance, Lady Julia consented to receive her. Little Woman's big heart bounded within her as she was ushered into her presence.

Lady Julia was a very beautiful woman, with a marble face and blue-black hair, and Little Woman felt her blood rush home as she looked upon her magnificent rival. But she did not cry—she was too excited for that; she stood in the centre of the room with one hand pressed to her heart, and breathing heavily, as one who had overtaxed her strength in running.

"Who are you? what do you want with me?" asked Lady Julia.

"I have come all the way from town to see you; forgive me—I am so unhappy!" gasped poor Little Woman.

"But what business have you with me? I am unwell, and may not be intruded upon without good cause."

"Lady Julia, I went first to Singleton, but he was not there."

Lady Julia started.

"Has your business any connection with Mr. Warren?"

Little Woman nodded affirmatively—she had no breath to speak with.

"Speak out—don't be afraid; let me know everything."

The proud woman seemed strangely agitated, although her countenance still wore the same cold marble rigidity as when Mary first entered the room. It was in the heaving of that magnificent bust, and the nervous clutching of those long firm fingers, that Mary saw that her words had worked some extraordinary effect on her rival.

"I am Mary Vyner—he loved me. Oh! I'm sure he loved me; give him back to me! Oh, Lady Julia, have mercy upon me!"

"*He* loved YOU!"

"Oh! so well; but that was long ago, when he was poor. He left me on his grandfather's death, promising to come back and marry me; but he never came, and I have been so ill."

Little Woman's tears came now.

"You should not have come here to seek your paramour—"

The tears stopped, frightened away by the indignant flash of Little Woman's eyes. Lady Julia saw that she had made a mistake. "I beg your pardon," she said; "I spoke in hot blood. Mr. Warren is not here; it will perhaps be some consolation to you to learn that he and I are utter strangers from this day. He has just left Singleton, and will never return."

"Left you?"

"Left me. It is enough for you to know that. If it will tend to restore your peace of mind to learn that Mr. Warren is nothing whatever to me—"

The tears in her proud eyes belied it, and she turned aside to hide them. But they came all the more for that, although she strove with all the force of her strong will to repress them. At last she bent her head upon the arm of the sofa on which she was sitting, and let them have their way.

Little Woman crept timidly to her side, and with fear and trembling took her noble rival's hand. Lady Julia did not withdraw it.

"Lady Julia, you are a lady of high rank, I am a poor milliner's girl; don't let me forget that in what I am going to say. I loved Ralph (I must call him so) devotedly; I love him still, or I should not be here. Before he quitted me, each day was an earthly life that died and left me in heaven. He was so good to me, so kind to me, so true to me; he was so clever and I so common-place. He left me to go to Singleton, and I have never seen him since. I have been true to him—who would not be?—I have waited and waited for him, believed in him through the long dreary days and the cold black nights—through a long, long illness which nearly killed me—through my slow recovery—even through the knowledge that he was on the point of being married to you. I loved him in my humble way as devotedly as you could have done. I suffered when he left me as you suffer now. Dear Lady Julia, I came here in hot anger to upbraid you for having torn my love from me; I remain to tell you how well I know how to sympathize with your bereavement, and to beg of you to pardon me for having broken in upon you with my selfish sorrow at such a time."

Lady Julia bent her beautiful head upon Little Woman's shoulder. All sense of animosity, all distinction of rank, was swamped by their common grief.

"We are sisters in our sorrow. God bless you, Mary Vyner, for your sympathy. You must leave me now; but take this ring, which may serve to remind you of the strange bond between us. Now go, but come and see me when I am stronger."

And Little Woman, with her hot sorrow strangely chastened, hurried back to town. * * * * *

And there she found, at last, a letter from Ralph. A hot, fevered letter, written under a passionate pulse—a letter that

told her how he had longed for her throughout his engagement to another, how her form had been in his mind all day, and in his eyes all night, how he had chafed under the fetters he had woven for himself, how he had freed himself from them at one reckless bound, and how he would be at the old trysting place at the old time that night.

And Little Woman kept the appointment.

# Christmas Day at Kirkby Cottage

*By* Anthony Trollope

From *Routledge's Christmas Annual*, 1870

# Anthony Trollope

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882), *until very recently the most neglected of the great Victorian novelists, was prolix and fecund to a fault, but he had two talents that score in the long run: he could create character, and he could write pleasantly. Warden Septimus Harding, Mrs. Proudie, the Rev. Josiah Crawley, and Mr. Chaffanbras are only a selection of the sharp characters who ornament and animate his charming pages. And in an age when rhetorical flourishes and exaggerated sentiments were applauded, he had the courage to be quietly realistic. Today the general noisiness of art and life is teaching us to value tranquillity; Trollope offers a restful haven to jaded emotions. In his* Autobiography *Trollope frets over the difficulty of turning out Christmas stories to order. "Nothing can be more distasteful to me than to have to give a relish of Christmas to what I write. I feel the humbug implied by the nature of the order."*[34] *It is amusing to note that Maurice Archer, the hero of "Christmas Day at Kirkby Cottage," also finds it difficult to drum up holiday spirit at will. At that, Trollope must have approached any short story with apprehension, for his genius was expansive and must have been pinched under restrictions of length. In the present instance he tries to jam too much plot in a few pages and neglects the characters, but there is enough light-heartedness and frivolity to give us a glimpse of the real Trollope, the keen delineator of manners.*

# Christmas Day at Kirkby Cottage

## Chapter I

*What Maurice Archer Said About Christmas*

"AFTER ALL, Christmas is a bore!"

"Even though you should think so, Mr. Archer, pray do not say so here."

"But it is."

"I am very sorry that you should feel like that; but pray do not say anything so very horrible."

"Why not? and why is it horrible? You know very well what I mean."

"I do not want to know what you mean; and it would make papa very unhappy if he were to hear you."

"A great deal of beef is roasted, and a great deal of pudding is boiled, and then people try to be jolly by eating more than usual. The consequence is, they get very sleepy, and want to go to bed an hour before the proper time. That's Christmas."

He who made this speech was a young man about twenty-three years old, and the other personage in the dialogue was a young lady, who might be, perhaps, three years his junior. The "papa" to whom the lady had alluded was the Rev. John Lownd, parson of Kirkby Cliffe, in Craven, and the scene was the parsonage library, as pleasant a little room as you would wish to see, in which the young man who thought Christmas to be a bore was at present sitting over the fire, in the parson's arm-chair, with a novel in his hand, which he had been reading till he was interrupted by the parson's daughter. It was nearly

time for him to dress for dinner, and the young lady was already dressed. She had entered the room on the pretext of looking for some book or paper, but perhaps her main object may have been to ask for some assistance from Maurice Archer in the work of decorating the parish church. The necessary ivy and holly branches had been collected, and the work was to be performed on the morrow. The day following would be Christmas Day. It must be acknowledged, that Mr. Archer had not accepted the proposition made to him very graciously.

Maurice Archer was a young man as to whose future career in life many of his elder friends shook their heads and expressed much fear. It was not that his conduct was dangerously bad, or that he spent his money too fast, but that he was abominably conceited, so said these elder friends; and then there was the unfortunate fact of his being altogether beyond control. He had neither father, nor mother, nor uncle, nor guardian. He was the owner of a small property not far from Kirkby Cliffe, which gave him an income of some six or seven hundred a year, and he had altogether declined any of the professions which had been suggested to him. He had, in the course of the year now coming to a close, taken his degree at Oxford, with some academical honours, which were not high enough to confer distinction, and had already positively refused to be ordained, although, would he do so, a small living would be at his disposal on the death of a septuagenarian cousin. He intended, he said, to farm a portion of his own land, and had already begun to make amicable arrangements for buying up the interest of one of his two tenants. The rector of Kirkby Cliffe, the Rev. John Lownd, had been among his father's dearest friends, and he was now the parson's guest for the Christmas.

There had been many doubts in the parsonage before the young man had been invited. Mrs. Lownd had considered that

the visit would be dangerous. Their family consisted of two daughters, the youngest of whom was still a child; but Isabel was turned twenty, and if a young man were brought into the house, would it not follow, as a matter of course, that she should fall in love with him? That was the mother's first argument. "Young people don't always fall in love," said the father. "But people will say that he is brought here on purpose," said the mother, using her second argument. The parson, who in family matters generally had his own way, expressed an opinion that if they were to be governed by what other people might choose to say, their course of action would be very limited indeed. As for his girl, he did not think she would ever give her heart to any man before it had been asked; and as for the young man,—whose father had been for over thirty years his dearest friend,—if he chose to fall in love, he must run his chance, like other young men. Mr. Lownd declared he knew nothing against him, except that he was, perhaps, a little self-willed; and so Maurice Archer came to Kirkby Cliffe, intending to spend two months in the same house with Isabel Lownd.

Hitherto, as far as the parents or the neighbours saw,—and in their endeavours to see, the neighbours were very diligent,—there had been no love-making. Between Mabel, the young daughter, and Maurice, there had grown up a violent friendship,—so much so, that Mabel, who was fourteen, declared that Maurice Archer was "the jolliest person" in the world. She called him Maurice, as did Mr. and Mrs. Lownd; and to Maurice, of course, she was Mabel. But between Isabel and Maurice it was always Miss Lownd and Mr. Archer, as was proper. It was so, at least, with this difference, that each of them had got into a way of dropping, when possible, the other's name.

It was acknowledged throughout Craven,—which my readers of course know to be a district in the northern portion of the

West Riding of Yorkshire, of which Skipton is the capital,—that Isabel Lownd was a very pretty girl. There were those who thought that Mary Manniwick, of Barden, excelled her; and others, again, expressed a preference for Fanny Grange, the pink-cheeked daughter of the surgeon at Giggleswick. No attempt shall here be made to award the palm of superior merit; but it shall be asserted boldly, that no man need desire a prettier girl with whom to fall in love than was Isabel Lownd. She was tall, active, fair, the very picture of feminine health, with bright gray eyes, a perfectly beautiful nose,—as is common to almost all girls belonging to Craven,—a mouth by no means delicately small, but eager, eloquent, and full of spirit, a well-formed short chin, with a dimple, and light brown hair, which was worn plainly smoothed over her brows, and fell in short curls behind her head. Of Maurice Archer it cannot be said that he was handsome. He had a snub nose; and a man so visaged can hardly be good-looking, though a girl with a snub nose may be very pretty. But he was a well-made young fellow, having a look of power about him, with dark-brown hair, cut very short, close shorn, with clear but rather small blue eyes, and an expression of countenance which allowed no one for a moment to think that he was weak in character, or a fool. His own place, called Hundlewick Hall, was about five miles from the parsonage. He had been there four or five times a week since his arrival at Kirkby Cliffe, and had already made arrangements for his own entrance upon the land in the following September. If a marriage were to come of it, the arrangement would be one very comfortable for the father and mother at Kirkby Cliffe. Mrs. Lownd had already admitted as much as that to herself, though she still trembled for her girl. Girls are so prone to lose their hearts, whereas the young men of these days are so very cautious and hard! That, at least, was Mrs. Lownd's idea of girls and young men; and even at this

present moment she was hardly happy about her child. Maurice, she was sure, had spoken never a word that might not have been proclaimed from the church tower; but her girl, she thought, was not quite the same as she had been before the young man had come among them. She was somewhat less easy in her manner, more preoccupied, and seemed to labour under a conviction that the presence in the house of Maurice Archer must alter the nature of her life. Of course it had altered the nature of her life, and of course she thought a great deal of Maurice Archer.

It had been chiefly at Mabel's instigation that Isabel had invited the co-operation of her father's visitor in the adornment of the church for Christmas Day. Isabel had expressed her opinion that Mr. Archer didn't care a bit about such things, but Mabel declared that she had already extracted a promise from him. "He'll do anything I ask him," said Mabel, proudly. Isabel, however, had not cared to undertake the work in such company, simply under her sister's management, and had proffered the request herself. Maurice had not declined the task,—had indeed promised his assistance in some indifferent fashion,—but had accompanied his promise by a suggestion that Christmas was a bore! Isabel had rebuked him, and then he had explained. But his explanation, in Isabel's view of the case, only made the matter worse. Christmas to her was a very great affair indeed,—a festival to which the roast beef and the plum pudding were, no doubt, very necessary; but not by any means the essence, as he had chosen to consider them. Christmas a bore! No; a man who thought Christmas to be a bore should never be more to her than a mere acquaintance. She listened to his explanation, and then left the room, almost indignantly. Maurice, when she had gone, looked after her, and then read a page of his novel; but he was thinking of Isabel, and not of the book. It was quite true that he had never said a word to her

that might not have been declared from the church tower; but, nevertheless, he had thought about her a good deal. Those were days on which he was sure that he was in love with her, and would make her his wife. Then there came days on which he ridiculed himself for the idea. And now and then there was a day on which he asked himself whether he was sure that she would take him were he to ask her. There was sometimes an air with her, some little trick of the body, a manner of carrying her head when in his presence, which he was not physiognomist enough to investigate, but which in some way suggested doubts to him. It was on such occasions as this that he was most in love with her; and now she had left the room with that particular motion of her head which seemed almost to betoken contempt.

"If you mean to do anything before dinner you'd better do it at once," said the parson, opening the door. Maurice jumped up, and in ten minutes was dressed and down in the dining-room. Isabel was there, but did not greet him. "You'll come and help us to-morrow," said Mabel, taking him by the arm and whispering to him.

"Of course I will," said Maurice.

"And you won't go to Hundlewick again till after Christmas?"

"It won't take up the whole day to put up the holly."

"Yes it will,—to do it nicely,—and nobody ever does any work the day before Christmas."

"Except the cook," suggested Maurice. Isabel, who heard the words, assumed that look of which he was already afraid, but said not a word. Then dinner was announced, and he gave his arm to the parson's wife.

Not a word was said about Christmas that evening. Isabel had threatened the young man with her father's displeasure on account of his expressed opinion as to the festival being a bore,

but Mr. Lownd was not himself one who talked a great deal about any Church festival. Indeed, it may be doubted whether his more enthusiastic daughter did not in her heart think him almost too indifferent on the subject. In the decorations of the church he, being an elderly man, and one with other duties to perform, would of course take no part. When the day came he would preach, no doubt, an appropriate sermon, would then eat his own roast beef and pudding with his ordinary appetite, would afterwards, if allowed to do so, sink into his arm-chair behind his book,—and then, for him, Christmas would be over. In all this there was no disrespect for the day, but it was hardly an enthusiastic observance. Isabel desired to greet the morning of her Saviour's birth with some special demonstration of joy. Perhaps from year to year she was somewhat disappointed,—but never before had it been hinted to her that Christmas was a bore.

On the following morning the work was to be commenced immediately after breakfast. The same thing had been done so often at Kirkby Cliffe, that the rector was quite used to it. David Drum, the clerk, who was also schoolmaster, and Barty Crossgrain, the parsonage gardener, would devote their services to the work in hand throughout the whole day, under the direction of Isabel. Mabel would of course be there assisting, as would also two daughters of a neighboring farmer. Mrs. Lownd would go down to the church about eleven, and stay till one, when the whole party would come up to the parsonage for refreshment. Mrs. Lownd would not return to the work, but the others would remain there till it was finished, which finishing was never accomplished till candles had been burned in the church for a couple of hours. Then there would be more refreshments; but on this special day the parsonage dinner was never comfortable and orderly. The rector bore it all with good humour, but no one could say that he was enthusiastic in

the matter. Mabel, who delighted in going up ladders, and leaning over the pulpit, and finding herself in all those odd parts of the church to which her imagination would stray during her father's sermons, but which were ordinarily inaccessible to her, took great delight in the work. And perhaps Isabel's delight had commenced with similar feelings. Immediately after breakfast, which was much hurried on the occasion, she put on her hat and hurried down to the church, without a word to Maurice on the subject. There was another whisper from Mabel, which was answered also with a whisper, and then Mabel also went. Maurice took up his novel, and seated himself comfortably by the parlour fire.

But again he did not read a word. Why had Isabel made herself so disagreeable, and why had she perked up her head as she left the room in that self-sufficient way, as though she was determined to show him that she did not want his assistance? Of course, she had understood well enough that he had not intended to say that the ceremonial observance of the day was a bore. He had spoken of the beef and the pudding, and she had chosen to pretend to misunderstand him. He would not go near the church. And as for his love, and his half-formed resolution to make her his wife, he would get over it altogether. If there were one thing more fixed with him than another, it was that on no consideration would he marry a girl who should give herself airs. Among them they might decorate the church as they pleased, and when he should see their handywork,—as he would do, of course, during the service of Christmas Day,—he would pass it by without a remark. So resolving, he again turned over a page or two of his novel, and then remembered that he was bound, at any rate, to keep his promise to his friend Mabel. Assuring himself that it was on that plea that he went, and on no other, he sauntered down to the church.

## Chapter II

### *Kirkby Cliffe Church*

Kirkby Cliffe Church stands close upon the River Wharfe, about a quarter of a mile from the parsonage, which is on a steep hill-side running down from the moors to the stream. A prettier little church or graveyard you shall hardly find in England. Here, no large influx of population has necessitated the removal of the last home of the parishioners from beneath the shelter of the parish church. Every inhabitant of Kirkby Cliffe has, when dead, the privilege of rest among those green hillocks. Within the building is still room for tablets commemorative of the rectors and their wives and families, for there are none others in the parish to whom such honour is accorded. Without the walls, here and there, stand the tombstones of the farmers; while the undistinguished graves of the peasants lie about in clusters which, solemn though they be, are still picturesque.The church itself is old, and may probably be doomed before long to that kind of destruction which is called restoration; but hitherto it has been allowed to stand beneath all its weight of ivy, and has known but little change during the last two hundred years. Its old oak pews, and ancient exalted reading-desk and pulpit are offensive to many who come to see the spot; but Isabel Lownd is of opinion that neither the one nor the other could be touched, in the way of change, without profanation.

In the very porch Maurice Archer met Mabel, with her arms full of ivy branches, attended by David Drum. "So you have come at last, Master Maurice?" she said.

"Come at last! Is that all the thanks I get? Now let me see what it is you're going to do. Is your sister here?"

"Of course she is. Barty is up in the pulpit, sticking holly branches round the sounding-board, and she is with him."

"T'boorde's that rotten an' maaky, it'll be doon on Miss Is'bel's heede, an' Barty Crossgrain ain't more than or'nary saft-handed," said the clerk.

They entered the church, and there it was, just as Mabel had said. The old gardener was standing on the rail of the pulpit, and Isabel was beneath, handing up to him nails and boughs, and giving him directions as to their disposal. "Naa, miss, naa; it wonot do that a-way," said Barty. "Thou'll ha' me o'er on to t'stanes—thou wilt, that a-gait. Lard-a-mussy, miss, thou munnot clim' up, or thou'lt be doon, and brek thee banes, thee ull!" So saying, Barty Crossgrain, who had contented himself with remonstrating when called upon by his young mistress to imperil his own neck, jumped on to the floor of the pulpit and took hold of the young lady by both her ankles. As he did so, he looked up at her with anxious eyes, and steadied himself on his own feet, as though it might become necessary for him to perform some great feat of activity. All this Maurice Archer saw, and Isabel saw that he saw it. She was not well pleased at knowing that he should see her in that position, held by the legs by the old gardener, and from which she could only extricate herself by putting her hand on the old man's neck as she jumped down from her perch. But she did jump down, and then began to scold Crossgrain, as though the awkwardness had come from fault of his.

"I've come to help, in spite of the hard words you said to me yesterday, Miss Lownd," said Maurice, standing on the lower steps of the pulpit. "Couldn't I get up and do the things at the top?" But Isabel thought that Mr. Archer could not get up and "do the things at the top." The wood was so far decayed that they must abandon the idea of ornamenting the sounding-board, and so both Crossgrain and Isabel descended into the body of the church.

Things did not go comfortably with them for the next hour.

Isabel had certainly invited his co-operation, and therefore could not tell him to go away; and yet, such was her present feeling towards him, she could not employ him profitably, and with ease to herself. She was somewhat angry with him, and more angry with herself. It was not only that she had spoken hard words to him, as he had accused her of doing, but that, after the speaking of the hard words, she had been distant and cold in her manner to him. And yet he was so much to her! she liked him so well!—and though she had never dreamed of admitting to herself that she was in love with him, yet—yet it would be so pleasant to have the opportunity of asking herself whether she could not love him, should he ever give her a fair and open opportunity of searching her own heart on the matter. There had now sprung up some half-quarrel between them, and it was impossible that it could be set aside by any action on her part. She could not be otherwise than cold and haughty in her demeanour to him. Any attempt at reconciliation must come from him, and the longer that she continued to be cold and haughty, the less chance there was that it would come. And yet she knew that she had been right to rebuke him for what he had said. "Christmas a bore!" She would rather lose his friendship for ever than hear such words from his mouth, without letting him know what she thought of them. Now he was there with her, and his coming could not but be taken as a sign of repentance. Yet she could not soften her manners to him, and become intimate with him, and playful, as had been her wont. He was allowed to pull about the masses of ivy, and to stick up branches of holly here and there at discretion; but what he did was done under Mabel's direction, and not under hers,—with the aid of one of the farmer's daughters, and not with her aid. In silence she continued to work round the chancel and communion-table, with Crossgrain, while Archer, Mabel, and David Drum used their taste and diligence in the nave and

aisles of the little church. Then Mrs. Lownd came among them, and things went more easily; but hardly a word had been spoken between Isabel and Maurice when, after sundry hints from David Drum as to the lateness of the hour, they left the church and went up to the parsonage for their luncheon.

Isabel stoutly walked on first, as though determined to show that she had no other idea in her head but that of reaching the parsonage as quickly as possible. Perhaps Maurice Archer had the same idea, for he followed her. Then he soon found that he was so far in advance of Mrs. Lownd and the old gardener as to be sure of three minutes' uninterrupted conversation; for Mabel remained with her mother, making earnest supplication as to the expenditure of certain yards of green silk tape, which she declared to be necessary for the due performance of the work which they had in hand. "Miss Lownd," said Maurice, "I think you are a little hard upon me."

"In what way, Mr. Archer?"

"You asked me to come down to the church, and you haven't spoken to me all the time I was there."

"I asked you to come and work, not to talk," she said.

"You asked me to come and work with you."

"I don't think that I said any such thing; and you came at Mabel's request, and not at mine. When I asked you, you told me it was all—a bore. Indeed you said much worse than that. I certainly did not mean to ask you again. Mabel asked you, and you came to oblige her. She talked to you, for I heard her; and I was half disposed to tell her not to laugh so much, and to remember that she was in church."

"I did not laugh, Miss Lownd."

"I was not listening especially to you."

"Confess, now," he said, after a pause; "don't you know that you misinterpreted me yesterday, and that you took what I said in a different spirit from my own."

"No; I do not know it."

"But you did. I was speaking of the holiday part of Christmas, which consists of pudding and beef, and is surely subject to ridicule, if one chooses to ridicule pudding and beef. You answered me as though I had spoken slightingly of the religious feeling which belongs to the day."

"You said that the whole thing was—; I won't repeat the word. Why should pudding and beef be a bore to you, when it is prepared as a sign that there shall be plenty on that day for people who perhaps don't have plenty on any other day of the year? The meaning of it is, that you don't like it all, because that which gives unusual enjoyment to poor people, who very seldom have any pleasure, is tedious to you. I don't like you for feeling it to be tedious. There! that's the truth. I don't mean to be uncivil, but—"

"You are very uncivil."

"What am I to say, when you come and ask me?"

"I do not well know how you could be more uncivil, Miss Lownd. Of course it is the commonest thing in the world, that one person should dislike another. It occurs every day, and people know it of each other. I can perceive very well that you dislike me, and I have no reason to be angry with you for disliking me. You have a right to dislike me, if your mind runs that way. But it is very unusual for one person to tell another so to his face,—and more unusual to say so to a guest." Maurice Archer, as he said this, spoke with a degree of solemnity to which she was not at all accustomed, so that she became frightened at what she had said. And not only was she frightened, but very unhappy also. She did not quite know whether she had or had not told him plainly that she disliked him, but she was quite sure that she had not intended to do so. She had been determined to scold him,—to let him see that, however much of real friendship there might be between them, she

would speak her mind plainly, if he offended her; but she certainly had not desired to give him cause for lasting wrath against her. "However," continued Maurice, "perhaps the truth is best after all, though it is so very unusual to hear such truths spoken."

"I didn't mean to be uncivil," stammered Isabel.

"But you meant to be true?"

"I meant to say what I felt about Christmas Day." Then she paused a moment. "If I have offended you, I beg your pardon."

He looked at her and saw that her eyes were full of tears, and his heart was at once softened towards her. Should he say a word to her, to let her know that there was,—or, at any rate, that henceforth there should be no offence? But it occurred to him that if he did so, that word would mean so much, and would lead perhaps to the saying of other words, which ought not to be shown without forethought. And now, too, they were within the parsonage gate, and there was no time for speaking. "You will go down again after lunch?" he asked.

"I don't know;—not if I can help it. Here's papa." She had begged his pardon,—had humbled herself before him. And he had not said a word in acknowledgment of the grace she had done him. She almost thought that she did dislike him,—really dislike him. Of course he had known what she meant, and he had chosen to misunderstand her and to take her, as it were, at an advantage. In her difficulty she had abjectly apologized to him, and he had not even deigned to express himself as satisfied with what she had done. She had known him to be conceited and masterful; but that, she had thought, she could forgive, believing it to be the common way with men,—imagining, perhaps, that a man was only the more worthy of love on account of such fault; but now she found that he was ungenerous also, and deficient in that chivalry without which a man can hardly appear at advantage in a woman's eyes. She

went on into the house, merely touching her father's arm, as she passed him, and hurried up to her own room. "Is there anything wrong with Isabel?" asked Mr. Lownd.

"She has worked too hard, I think, and is tired," said Maurice.

Within ten minutes they were all assembled in the dining-room, and Mabel was loud in her narrative of the doings of the morning. Barty Crossgrain and David Drum had both declared the sounding-board to be so old that it mustn't even be touched, and she was greatly afraid that it would tumble down some day and "squash papa" in the pulpit. The rector ridiculed the idea of any such disaster; and then there came a full description of the morning's scene, and of Barty's fears lest Isabel should "brek her banes." "His own wig was almost off," said Mabel, "and he gave Isabel such a lug by the leg that she very nearly had to jump into his arms." "I didn't do anything of the kind," said Isabel. "You had better leave the sounding-board alone," said the parson.

"We have left it alone, papa," said Isabel, with great dignity. "There are some other things that can't be done this year." For Isabel was becoming tired of her task, and would not have returned to the church at all could she have avoided it.

"What other things?" demanded Mabel, who was as enthusiastic as ever. "We can finish all the rest. Why shouldn't we finish it? We are ever so much more forward than we were last year, when David and Barty went to dinner. We've finished the Granby-Moor pew, and we never used to get to that till after luncheon." But Mabel on this occasion had all the enthusiasm to herself. The two farmer's daughters, who had been brought up to the parsonage as usual, never on such occasions uttered a word. Mrs. Lownd had completed her part of the work; Maurice could not trust himself to speak on the subject; and Isabel was dumb. Luncheon, however, was soon over, and something must be done. The four girls of course re-

turned to their labours, but Maurice did not go with them, nor did he make any excuse for not doing so.

"I shall walk over to Hundlewick before dinner," he said, as soon as they were all moving. The rector suggested that he would hardly be back in time. "Oh, yes; ten miles—two hours and a half; and I shall have two hours there besides. I must see what they are doing with our own church, and how they mean to keep Christmas there. I'm not quite sure that I shan't go over there again to-morrow." Even Mabel felt that there was something wrong, and said not a word in opposition to this wicked desertion.

He did walk to Hundlewick and back again, and when at Hundlewick he visited the church, though the church was a mile beyond his own farm. And he added something to the store provided for the beef and pudding of those who lived upon his own land; but of this he said nothing on his return to Kirkby Cliffe. He walked his dozen miles, and saw what was being done about the place, and visited the cottages of some who knew him, and yet was back at the parsonage in time for dinner. And during his walk he turned many things over in his thoughts, and endeavoured to make up his mind on one or two points. Isabel had never looked so pretty as when she jumped down into the pulpit, unless it was when she was begging his pardon for her want of courtesy to him. And though she had been, as he described it to himself, "rather down upon him," in regard to what he had said of Christmas, did he not like her the better for having an opinion of her own? And then, as he had stood for a few minutes leaning on his own gate, and looking at his own house at Hundlewick, it had occurred to him that he could hardly live there without a companion. After that he had walked back again, and was dressed for dinner, and in the drawing-room before any one of the family.

With poor Isabel the afternoon had gone much less satisfac-

torily. She found that she almost hated her work, that she really had a headache, and that she could put no heart into what she was doing. She was cross to Mabel, and almost surly to David Drum and Barty Crossgrain. The two farmer's daughters were allowed to do almost what they pleased with the holly branches,—a state of things which was most unusual,—and then Isabel, on her return to the parsonage, declared her intention of going to bed! Mrs. Lownd, who had never before known her to do such a thing, was perfectly shocked. Go to bed, and not come down the whole of Christmas Eve! But Isabel was resolute. With a bad headache she would be better in bed than up. Were she to attempt to shake it off, she would be ill the next day. She did not want anything to eat, and would not take anything. No; she would not have any tea, but would go to bed at once. And to bed she went.

She was thoroughly discontented with herself, and felt that Maurice had, as it were, made up his mind against her forever. She hardly knew whether to be angry with herself or with him; but she did know very well that she had not intended really to quarrel with him. Of course she had been in earnest in what she had said; but he had taken her words as signifying so much more than she had intended! If he chose to quarrel with her, of course he must; but a friend could not, she was sure, care for her a great deal who would really be angry with her for such a trifle. Of course this friend did not care for her at all,—not the least, or he would not treat her so savagely. He had been quite savage to her, and she hated him for it. And yet she hated herself almost more. What right could she have had first to scold him, and then to tell him to his face that she disliked him? Of course he had gone away to Hundlewick. She would not have been a bit surprised if he had stayed there and never come back again. But he did come back, and she hated herself as she heard their voices as they all went in to dinner without her. It

seemed to her that his voice was more cheery than ever. Last night and all the morning he had been silent and almost sullen, but now, the moment that she was away, he could talk and be full of spirits. She heard Mabel's ringing laughter downstairs, and she almost hated Mabel. It seemed to her that everybody was gay and happy because she was upstairs in her bed, and ill. Then there came a peal of laughter. She was glad that she was upstairs in bed, and ill. Nobody would have laughed, nobody would have been gay, had she been there. Maurice Archer liked them all, except her,—she was sure of that. And what could be more natural after her conduct to him? She had taken upon herself to lecture him, and of course he had not chosen to endure it. But of one thing she was quite sure, as she lay there, wretched in her solitude,—that now she would never alter her demeanour to him. He had chosen to be cold to her, and she would be like frozen ice to him. Again and again she heard their voices, and then, sobbing on her pillow, she fell asleep.

## Chapter III

### *Showing How Isabel Lownd Told a Lie*

On the following morning,—Christmas morning,—when she woke, her headache was gone, and she was able, as she dressed, to make some stern resolutions. The ecstasy of her sorrow was over, and she could see how foolish she had been to grieve as she had grieved. After all, what had she lost, or what harm had she done? She had never fancied that the young man was her lover, and she had never wished,—so she now told herself,—that he should become her lover. If one thing was plainer to her than another, it was this—that they two were not fitted for each other. She had sometimes whispered to herself, that if she were to marry at all, she would fain marry a clergyman. Now, no man could be more unlike a clergyman than Maurice

Archer. He was, she thought, irreverent, and at no pains to keep his want of reverence out of sight, even in that house. He had said that Christmas was a bore, which, to her thinking, was abominable. Was she so poor a creature as to go to bed and cry for a man who had given her no sign that he even liked her, and of whose ways she disapproved so greatly, that even were he to offer her his hand she would certainly refuse it? She consoled herself for the folly of the preceding evening by assuring herself that she had really worked in the church till she was ill, and that she would have gone to bed, and must have gone to bed, had Maurice Archer never been seen or heard of at the parsonage. Other people went to bed when they had headaches, and why should not she? Then she resolved, as she dressed, that there should be no sign of illness, nor bit of ill-humour on her, on this sacred day. She would appear among them all full of mirth and happiness, and would laugh at the attack brought upon her by Barty Crossgrain's sudden fear in the pulpit; and she would greet Maurice Archer with all possible cordiality, wishing him a merry Christmas as she gave him her hand, and would make him understand in a moment that she had altogether forgotten their mutual bickerings. He should understand that, or should, at least, understand that she willed that it should all be regarded as forgotten. What was he to her, that any thought of him should be allowed to perplex her mind on such a day as this?

She went down stairs, knowing that she was the first up in the house,—the first, excepting the servants. She went into Mabel's room, and kissing her sister, who was only half awake, wished her many, many, many happy Christmases.

"Oh, Bell," said Mabel, "I do so hope you are better!"

"Of course I am better. Of course I am well. There is nothing for a headache like having twelve hours round of sleep. I don't know what made me so tired and so bad."

"I though it was something Maurice said," suggested Mabel.

"Oh, dear, no. I think Barty had more to do with it than Mr. Archer. The old fellow frightened me so when he made me think I was falling down. But get up, dear. Papa is in his room, and he'll be ready for prayers before you."

Then she descended to the kitchen, and offered her good wishes to all the servants. To Barty, who always breakfasted there on Christmas mornings, she was especially kind, and said something civil about his work in the church.

"She'll 'bout brek her little heart for t' young mon there, an' he's naa true t' her," said Barty, as soon as Miss Lownd had closed the kitchen door; showing, perhaps, that he knew more of the matter concerning herself than she did.

She then went into the parlour to prepare the breakfast, and to put a little present, which she had made for her father, on his plate;—when, whom should she see but Maurice Archer!

It was a fact known to all the household, and a fact that had not recommended him at all to Isabel, that Maurice never did come down stairs in time for morning prayers. He was always the last; and, though in most respects a very active man, seemed to be almost a sluggard in regard to lying in bed late. As far as she could remember at the moment, he had never been present at prayers a single morning since the first after his arrival at the parsonage, when shame, and a natural feeling of strangeness in the house, had brought him out of his bed. Now he was there half an hour before the appointed time, and during that half-hour she was doomed to be alone with him. But her courage did not for a moment desert her.

"This is a wonder!" she said, as she took his hand. "You will have a long Christmas Day, but I sincerely hope that it may be a happy one."

"That depends on you," said he.

"I'll do everything I can," she answered. "You shall only

have a very little bit of roast beef, and the unfortunate pudding shan't be brought near you." Then she looked in his face, and saw that his manner was very serious,—almost solemn,—and quite unlike his usual ways. "Is anything wrong?" she asked.

"I don't know; I hope not. There are things which one has to say which seem to be so very difficult when the time comes. Miss Lownd, I want you to love me."

"What!" She started back as she made the exclamation, as though some terrible proposition had wounded her ears. If she had ever dreamed of his asking for her love, she had dreamed of it as a thing that future days might possibly produce;—when he should be altogether settled at Hundlewick, and when they should have got to know each other intimately by the association of years.

"Yes, I want you to love me, and to be my wife. I don't know how to tell you; but I love you better than anything and everything in the world,—better than all the world put together. I have done so from the first moment that I saw you; I have. I knew how it would be the very first instant I saw your dear face, and every word you have spoken, and every look out of your eyes, has made me love you more and more. If I offended you yesterday, I will beg your pardon."

"Oh, no," she said.

"I wish I had bitten my tongue out before I had said what I did about Christmas Day. I do, indeed. I only meant, in a half-joking way, to— to— to—. But I ought to have known you wouldn't like it, and I beg your pardon. Tell me, Isabel, do you think that you can love me?"

Not half an hour since she had made up her mind that, even were he to propose to her,—which she then knew to be absolutely impossible,—she would certainly refuse him. He was not the sort of man for whom she would be a fitting wife; and she

had made up her mind also, at the same time, that she did not at all care for him, and that he certainly did not in the least care for her. And now the offer had absolutely been made to her! Then came across her mind an idea that he ought in the first place to have gone to her father; but as to that she was not quite sure. Be that as it might, there he was, and she must give him some answer. As for thinking about it, that was altogether beyond her. The shock to her was too great to allow of her thinking. After some fashion, which afterwards was quite unintelligible to herself, it seemed to her, at that moment, that duty, and maidenly reserve, and filial obedience, all required her to reject him instantly. Indeed, to have accepted him would have been quite beyond her power. "Dear Isabel," said he, "may I hope that some day you will love me?"

"Oh! Mr. Archer, don't," she said. "Do not ask me."

"Why should I not ask you?"

"It can never be." This she said quite plainly, and in a voice that seemed to him to settle his fate for ever; and yet at the moment her heart was full of love towards him. Though she could not think, she could feel. Of course she loved him. At the very moment in which she was telling him that it could never be, she was elated by an almost ecstatic triumph, as she remembered all her fears, and now knew that the man was at her feet.

When a girl first receives the homage of a man's love, and receives it from one whom, whether she loves him or not, she thoroughly respects, her earliest feeling is one of victory,—such a feeling as warmed the heart of a conqueror in the Olympian games. He is the spoil of her spear, the fruit of her prowess, the quarry brought down by her own bow and arrow. She, too, by some power of her own which she is hitherto quite unable to analyze, has stricken a man to the very heart, so as to compel him for the moment to follow wherever she may lead him.

So it was with Isabel Lownd as she stood there, conscious of the eager gaze which was fixed upon her face, and fully alive to the anxious tones of her lover's voice. And yet she could only deny him. Afterwards, when she thought of it, she could not imagine why it had been so with her; but, in spite of her great love, she continued to tell herself that there was some obstacle which could never be overcome,—or was it that a certain maidenly reserve sat so strong within her bosom that she could not bring herself to own to him that he was dear to her?

"Never!" exclaimed Maurice, despondently.

"Oh, no!"

"But why not? I will be very frank with you, dear. I did think you liked me a little before that affair in the study." Like him a little! Oh, how she had loved him! She knew it now, and yet not for worlds could she tell him so. "You are not still angry with me, Isabel?"

"No; not angry."

"Why should you say never? Dear Isabel, cannot you try to love me?" Then he attempted to take her hand, but she recoiled at once from his touch, and did feel something of anger against him in that he should thus refuse to take her word. She knew not what it was that she desired of him, but certainly he should not attempt to take her hand, when she told him plainly that she could not love him. A red spot rose to each of her cheeks as again he pressed her. "Do you really mean that you can never, never love me?" She muttered some answer, she knew not what, and then he turned from her, and stood looking out upon the snow which had fallen during the night. She kept her ground for a few seconds, and then escaped through the door, and up to her own bedroom. When once there, she burst out into tears. Could it be possible that she had thrown away for ever her own happiness, because she had been too silly to give a true answer to an honest question? And was this

the enjoyment and content which she had promised herself for Christmas Day? But surely, surely he would come to her again. If he really loved her as he had declared, if it was true that ever since his arrival at Kirkby Cliffe he had thought of her as his wife, he would not abandon her because in the first tumult of her surprise she had lacked courage to own to him the truth; and then in the midst of her tears there came upon her that delicious recognition of a triumph which, whatever be the victory won, causes such elation to the heart! Nothing, at any rate, could rob her of this—that he had loved her. Then, as a thought suddenly struck her, she ran quickly across the passage, and in a moment was upstairs, telling her tale with her mother's arm close folded round her waist.

In the meantime Mr. Lownd had gone down to the parlour, and had found Maurice still looking out upon the snow. He, too, with some gentle sarcasm, had congratulated the young man on his early rising, as he expressed the ordinary wish of the day. "Yes," said Maurice, "I had something special to do. Many happy Christmases, sir! I don't know much about its being happy to me."

"Why, what ails you?"

"It's a nasty sort of day, isn't it?" said Maurice.

"Does that trouble you? I rather like a little snow on Christmas Day. It has a pleasant, old-fashioned look. And there isn't enough to keep even an old woman at home."

"I dare say not," said Maurice, who was still beating about the bush, having something to tell, but not knowing how to tell it. "Mr. Lownd, I should have come to you first, if it hadn't been for an accident."

"Come to me first! What accident?"

"Yes; only I found Miss Lownd down here this morning, and I asked her to be my wife. You needn't be unhappy about it, sir. She refused me point blank."

"You must have startled her, Maurice. You have startled me, at any rate."

"There was nothing of that sort, Mr. Lownd. She took it all very easily. I think she does take things easily." Poor Isabel! "She just told me plainly that it never could be so, and then she walked out of the room."

"I don't think she expected it, Maurice."

"Oh, dear no! I'm quite sure she didn't. She hadn't thought about me any more than if I were an old dog. I suppose men do make fools of themselves sometimes. I shall get over it, sir."

"Oh, I hope so."

"I shall give up the idea of living here. I couldn't do that. I shall probably sell the property, and go to Africa."

"Go to Africa!"

"Well, yes. It's as good a place as any other, I suppose. It's wild, and a long way off, and all that kind of thing. As this is Christmas, I had better stay here to-day, I suppose."

"Of course you will."

"If you don't mind, I'll be off early to-morrow, sir. It's a kind of thing, you know, that does flurry a man. And then my being here may be disagreeable to her;—not that I suppose she thinks about me any more than if I were an old cow."

It need hardly be remarked that the rector was a much older man than Maurice Archer, and that he therefore knew the world much better. Nor was he in love. And he had, moreover, the advantage of a much closer knowledge of the young lady's character than could be possessed by the lover. And, as it happened, during the last week, he had been fretted by fears expressed by his wife,—fears which were altogether opposed to Archer's present despondency and African resolutions. Mrs. Lownd had been uneasy,—almost more than uneasy,—lest poor dear Isabel should be stricken at her heart; whereas, in regard to that young man, she didn't believe that he cared a

bit for her girl. He ought not to have been brought into the house. But he was there, and what could they do? The rector was of opinion that things would come straight,—that they would be straightened not by any lover's propensities on the part of his guest, as to which he protested himself to be altogether indifferent, but by his girl's good sense. His Isabel would never allow herself to be seriously affected by a regard for a young man who had made no overtures to her. That was the rector's argument; and perhaps, within his own mind, it was backed by a feeling that, were she so weak, she must stand the consequence. To him it seemed to be an absurd degree of caution that two young people should not be brought together in the same house lest one should fall in love with the other. And he had seen no symptoms of such love. Nevertheless his wife had fretted him, and he had been uneasy. Now the shoe was altogether on the other foot. The young man was the despondent lover, and was asserting that he must go instantly to Africa, because the young lady treated him like an old dog, and thought no more about him than of an old cow.

A father in such a position can hardly venture to hold out hopes to a lover, even though he may approve of the man as a suitor for his daughter's hand. He cannot answer for his girl, nor can he very well urge upon a lover the expediency of renewing his suit. In this case Mr. Lownd did think, that in spite of the cruel, determined obduracy which his daughter was said to have displayed, she might probably be softened by constancy and perseverance. But he knew nothing of the circumstances, and could only suggest that Maurice should not take his place for the first stage on his way to Africa quite at once. "I do not think you need hurry away because of Isabel," he said, with a gentle smile.

"I couldn't stand it,—I couldn't indeed," said Maurice, impetuously. "I hope I didn't do wrong in speaking to her

when I found her here this morning. If you had come first I should have told you."

"I could only have referred you to her, my dear boy. Come —here they are; and now we will have prayers." As he spoke, Mrs. Lownd entered the room, followed closely by Mabel, and then at a little distance by Isabel. The three maid-servants were standing behind in a line, ready to come in for prayers. Maurice could not but feel that Mrs. Lownd's manner to him was especially affectionate; for, in truth, hitherto she had kept somewhat aloof from him, as though he had been a ravening wolf. Now she held him by the hand, and had a spark of motherly affection in her eyes, as she, too, repeated her Christmas greeting. It might well be so, thought Maurice. Of course she would be more kind to him than ordinary, if she knew that he was a poor blighted individual. It was a thing of course that Isabel should have told her mother; equally a thing of course that he should be pitied and treated tenderly. But on the next day he would be off. Such tenderness as that would kill him.

As they sat at breakfast, they all tried to be very gracious to each other. Mabel was sharp enough to know that something special had happened, but could not quite be sure what it was. Isabel struggled very hard to make little speeches about the day, but cannot be said to have succeeded well. Her mother, who had known at once how it was with her child, and had required no positive answers to direct questions to enable her to assume that Isabel was now devoted to her lover, had told her girl that if the man's love were worth having, he would surely ask her again. "I don't think he will, mamma," Isabel had whispered, with her face half-hidden on her mother's arm. "He must be very unlike other men if he does not," Mrs. Lownd had said, resolving that the opportunity should not be wanting. Now she was very gracious to Maurice, speaking before him as though he were quite one of the family. Her

trembling maternal heart had feared him, while she thought that he might be a ravening wolf, who would steal away her daughter's heart, leaving nothing in return; but now that he had proved himself willing to enter the fold as a useful domestic sheep, nothing could be too good for him. The parson himself, seeing all this, understanding every turn in his wife's mind, and painfully anxious that no word might be spoken which should seem to entrap his guest, strove diligently to talk as though nothing was amiss. He spoke of his sermon, and of David Drum, and of the allowance of pudding that was to be given to the inmates of the neighbouring poor-house. There had been a subscription, so as to relieve the rates from the burden of the plum-pudding, and Mr. Lownd thought that the farmers had not been sufficiently liberal. "There's Furness, at Loversloup, gave us a half-a-crown. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself. He declared to me to my face that if he could find puddings for his own bairns, that was enough for him."

"The richest farmer in these parts, Maurice," said Mrs. Lownd.

"He holds above three hundred acres of land, and could stock double as many, if he had them," said the would-be indignant rector, who was thinking a great deal more of his daughter than of the poor-house festival. Maurice answered him with a word or two, but found it very hard to assume any interest in the question of the pudding. Isabel was more hard-hearted, he thought, than even Farmer Furness, of Loversloup. And why should he trouble himself about these people,—he, who intended to sell his acres, and go away to Africa? But he smiled and made some reply, and buttered his toast, and struggled hard to seem as though nothing ailed him.

The parson went down to church before his wife, and Mabel went with him. "Is anything wrong with Maurice Archer?" she asked her father.

"Nothing, I hope," said he.

"Because he doesn't seem to be able to talk this morning."

"Everybody isn't a chatter-box like you, Mab."

"I don't think I chatter more than mamma, or Bell. Do you know, papa, I think Bell has quarrelled with Maurice Archer."

"I hope not. I should be very sorry that there should be any quarrelling at all—particularly on this day. Well, I think you've done it very nicely; and it is none the worse because you've left the sounding-board alone." Then Mabel went over to David Drum's cottage, and asked after the condition of Mrs. Drum's plum-pudding.

No one had ventured to ask Maurice Archer whether he would stay in church for the sacrament, but he did. Let us hope that no undue motive of pleasing Isabel Lownd had any effect upon him at such a time. But it did please her. Let us hope also that, as she knelt beside her lover at the low railing, her young heart was not too full of her love. That she had been thinking of him throughout her father's sermon,—thinking of him, then resolving that she would think of him no more, and then thinking of him more than ever,—must be admitted. When her mother had told her that he would come again to her, she had not attempted to assert that, were he to do so, she would again reject him. Her mother knew all her secret, and, should he not come again, her mother would know that she was heart-broken. She had told him positively that she would never love him. She had so told him, knowing well that at the very moment he was dearer to her than all the world beside. Why had she been so wicked as to lie to him? And if now she were punished for her lie by his silence, would she not be served properly? Her mind ran much more on the subject of this great sin which she had committed on that very morning,—that sin against one who loved her so well, and who desired to do good to her,—than on those general arguments in favour of Chris-

tian kindness and forbearance which the preacher drew from the texts applicable to Christmas Day. All her father's eloquence was nothing to her. On ordinary occasions he had no more devoted listener; but, on this morning, she could only exercise her spirit by repenting her own unchristian conduct. And then he came and knelt beside her at that sacred moment! It was impossible that he should forgive her, because he could not know that she had sinned against him.

There were certain visits to her poorer friends in the immediate village which, according to custom, she would make after church. When Maurice and Mrs. Lownd went up to the parsonage, she and Mabel made their usual round. They all welcomed her, but they felt that she was not quite herself with them, and even Mabel asked her what ailed her.

"Why should anything ail me?—only I don't like walking in the snow."

Then Mabel took courage. "If there is a secret, Bell, pray tell me. I would tell you any secret."

"I don't know what you mean," said Isabel, almost crossly.

"Is there a secret, Bell? I'm sure there is a secret about Maurice."

"Don't,—don't," said Isabel.

"I do like Maurice so much. Don't you like him?"

"Pray do not talk about him, Mabel."

"I believe he is in love with you, Bell; and, if he is, I think you ought to be in love with him. I don't know how you could have anybody nicer. And he is going to live at Hundlewick, which would be such great fun. Would not papa like it?"

"I don't know. Oh, dear!—oh, dear!" Then she burst out into tears, and, walking out of the village, told Mabel the whole truth. Mabel heard it with consternation, and expressed her opinion that, in these circumstances, Maurice would never ask again to make her his wife.

"Then I shall die," said Isabel, frankly.

## Chapter IV

*Showing How Isabel Lownd Repented Her Fault*

In spite of her piteous condition and near prospect of death, Isabel Lownd completed her round of visits among her old friends. That Christmas should be kept in some way by every inhabitant of Kirkby Cliffe, was a thing of course. The district is not poor, and plenty on that day was rarely wanting. But Parson Lownd was not what we call a rich man; and there was no resident squire in the parish. The farmers, comprehending well their own privileges, and aware that the obligation of gentle living did not lie on them, were inclined to be close-fisted; and thus there was sometimes a difficulty in providing for the old and the infirm. There was a certain ancient widow in the village, of the name of Mucklewort, who was troubled with three orphan grandchildren and a lame daughter; and Isabel had, some days since, expressed a fear up at the parsonage that the good things of this world might be scarce in the old widow's cottage. Something had, of course, been done for the old woman, but not enough, as Isabel had thought. "My dear," her mother had said, "it is no use trying to make very poor people think that they are not poor."

"It is only one day in the year," Isabel had pleaded.

"What you give in excess to one, you take from another," replied Mrs. Lownd, with the stern wisdom which experience teaches. Poor Isabel could say nothing further, but had feared greatly that the rations in Mrs. Mucklewort's abode would be deficient. She now entered the cottage, and found the whole family at that moment preparing themselves for the consumption of a great Christmas banquet. Mrs. Mucklewort, whose temper was not always the best in the world, was radiant. The children were silent, open-eyed, expectant, and solemn. The lame aunt was in the act of transferring a large lump of beef,

which seemed to be commingled in a most inartistic way with potatoes and cabbage, out of a pot on to the family dish. At any rate there was plenty; for no five appetites—had the five all been masculine, adult, and yet youthful—could, by any feats of strength, have emptied that dish at a sitting. And Isabel knew well that there had been pudding. She herself had sent the pudding; but that, as she was well aware, had not been allowed to abide its fate till this late hour of the day. "I'm glad you're all so well employed," said Isabel. "I thought you had done dinner long ago. I won't stop a minute now."

The old woman got up from her chair, and nodded her head, and held out her withered old hand to be shaken. The children opened their mouths wider than ever, and hoped there might be no great delay. The lame aunt curtseyed and explained the circumstances. "Beef, Miss Isabel, do take a mortal time t'boil; and it ain't no wise good for t' bairns to have it any ways raw." To this opinion Isabel gave her full assent, and expressed her gratification that the amount of the beef should be sufficient to require so much cooking. Then the truth came out. "Muster Archer just sent us over from Rowdy's a meal's meat with a vengence; God bless him!" "God bless him!" crooned out the old woman, and the children muttered some unintelligible sound, as though aware that duty required them to express some Amen to the prayer of their elders. Now Rowdy was the butcher living at Grassington, some six miles away,—for at Kirkby Cliffe there was no butcher. Isabel smiled all round upon them sweetly, with her eyes full of tears, and then left the cottage without a word.

He had done this because she had expressed a wish that these people should be kindly treated,—had done it without a syllable spoken to her or to any one,—had taken trouble, sending all the way to Grassington for Mrs. Mucklewort's beef! No doubt he had given other people beef, and had whispered no

word of his kindness to any one at the rectory. And yet she had taken upon herself to rebuke him, because he had not cared for Christmas Day! As she walked along, silent, holding Mabel's hand, it seemed to her that of all men he was the most perfect. She had rebuked him, and had then told him—with incredible falseness—that she did not like him; and after that, when he had proposed to her in the kindest, noblest manner, she had rejected him,—almost as though he had not been good enough for her! She felt now as though she would like to bite the tongue out of her head for such misbehaviour.

"Was not that nice of him?" said Mabel. But Isabel could not answer the question. "I always thought he was like that," continued the younger sister. "If he were my lover, I'd do anything he asked me, because he is so good-natured."

"Don't talk to me," said Isabel. And Mabel, who comprehended something of the condition of her sister's mind, did not say another word on their way back to the parsonage.

It was the rule of the house that on Christmas Day they should dine at four o'clock;—a rule which almost justified the very strong expression with which Maurice first offended the young lady whom he loved. To dine at one or two o'clock is a practice which has its recommendations. It suits the appetite, is healthy, and divides the day into two equal halves, so that no man so dining fancies that his dinner should bring to him an end of his usual occupations. And to dine at six, seven, or eight is well adapted to serve several purposes of life. It is convenient, as inducing that gentle lethargy which will sometimes follow the pleasant act of eating at a time when the work of the day is done; and it is both fashionable and comfortable. But to dine at four is almost worse than not to dine at all. The rule, however, existed at Kirkby Cliffe parsonage in regard to this one special day in the year, and was always obeyed.

On this occasion Isabel did not see her lover from the mo-

ment in which he left her at the church door till they met at table. She had been with her mother, but her mother had said not a word to her about Maurice. Isabel knew very well that they two had walked home together from the church, and she had thought that her best chance lay in the possibility that he would have spoken of what had occurred during the walk. Had this been so, surely her mother would have told her; but not a word had been said; and even with her mother Isabel had been too shamefaced to ask a question. In truth, Isabel's name had not been mentioned between them, nor had any allusion been made to what had taken place during the morning. Mrs. Lownd had been too wise and too wary,—too well aware of what was really due to her daughter,—to bring up the subject herself; and he had been silent, subdued, and almost sullen. If he could not get an acknowledgment of affection from the girl herself, he certainly would not endeavour to extract a cold compliance by the mother's aid. Africa, and a disruption of all the plans of his life, would be better to him than that. But Mrs. Lownd knew very well how it was with him; knew how it was with them both; and was aware that in such a condition things should be allowed to arrange themselves. At dinner, both she and the rector were full of mirth and good humour, and Mabel, with great glee, told the story of Mrs. Muckleworts dinner. "I don't want to destroy your pleasure," she said, bobbing her head at Maurice; "but it did look so nasty! Beef should always be roast beef on Christmas Day."

"I told the butcher it was to be roast beef," said Maurice, sadly.

"I dare say the little Muckleworts would just as soon have it boiled," said Mrs. Lownd. "Beef is beef to them, and a pot for boiling is an easy apparatus."

"If you had beef, Miss Mab, only once or twice a year," said her father, "you would not care whether it were roast or

boiled." But Isabel spoke not a word. She was most anxious to join the conversation about Mrs. Mucklewort, and would have liked much to give testimony to the generosity displayed in regard to quantity; but she found that she could not do it. She was absolutely dumb. Maurice Archer did speak, making, every now and then, a terrible effort to be jocose; but Isabel from first to last was silent. Only by silence could she refrain from a renewed deluge of tears.

In the evening two or three girls came in with their younger brothers, the children of farmers of the better class in the neighbourhood, and the usual attempts were made at jollity. Games were set on foot, in which even the rector joined, instead of going to sleep behind his book, and Mabel, still conscious of her sister's wounds, did her very best to promote the sports. There was blindman's-buff, and hide and seek, and snapdragon, and forfeits, and a certain game with music and chairs,—very prejudicial to the chairs,—in which it was everybody's object to sit down as quickly as possible when the music stopped. In the game Isabel insisted on playing, because she could do that alone. But even to do this was too much for her. The sudden pause could hardly be made without a certain hilarity of spirit, and her spirits were unequal to any exertion. Maurice went through his work like a man, was blinded, did his forfeits, and jostled for the chairs with the greatest diligence; but in the midst of it all he, too, was as solemn as a judge and never once spoke a single word to Isabel. Mrs. Lownd, who usually was not herself much given to the playing of games, did on this occasion make an effort, and absolutely consented to cry the forfeits; but Mabel was wonderfully quiet, so that the farmers' daughters hardly perceived that there was anything amiss.

It came to pass, after a while, that Isabel had retreated to her room,—not for the night, as it was as yet hardly eight

o'clock,—and she certainly would not disappear till the visitors had taken their departure,—a ceremony which was sure to take place with the greatest punctuality at ten, after an early supper. But she had escaped for awhile, and in the meantime some frolic was going on which demanded the absence of one of the party from the room, in order that mysteries might be arranged of which the absent one should remain in ignorance. Maurice was thus banished, and desired to remain in desolation for the space of five minutes; but, just as he had taken up his position, Isabel descended with slow, solemn steps and found him standing at her father's study door. She was passing on, and had almost entered the drawing-room, when he called her. "Miss Lownd," he said. Isabel stopped, but did not speak; she was absolutely beyond speaking. The excitement of the day had been so great, that she was all but overcome by it, and doubted, herself, whether she would be able to keep up appearances till the supper should be over, and she should be relieved for the night. "Would you let me say one word to you?" said Maurice. She bowed her head and went with him into the study.

Five minutes had been allowed for the arrangement of the mysteries, and at the end of five minutes Maurice was authorized, by the rules of the game, to return to the room. But he did not come, and upon Mabel's suggesting that possibly he might not be able to see his watch in the dark, she was sent to fetch him. She burst into the study, and there she found the truant and her sister, very close, standing together on the hearthrug. "I didn't know you were here, Bell," she exclaimed. Whereupon Maurice, as she declared aferwards, jumped round the table after her, and took her in his arms and kissed her. "But you must come," said Mabel, who accepted the embrace with perfect good-will.

"Of course you must. Do go, pray, and I'll follow,—almost

immediately." Mabel perceived at once that her sister had altogether recovered her voice.

"I'll tell 'em you're coming," said Mabel, vanishing.

"You must go now," said Isabel. "They'll all be away soon, and then you can talk about it." As she spoke, he was standing with his arm round her waist, and Isabel Lownd was the happiest girl in all Craven.

Mrs. Lownd knew all about it from the moment in which Maurice Archer's prolonged absence had become cause of complaint among the players. Her mind had been intent upon the matter, and she had become well aware that it was only necessary that the two young people should be alone together for a few moments. Mabel had entertained great hopes, thinking, however, that perhaps three or four years must be passed in melancholy gloomy doubts before the path of true love could be made to run smooth; but the light had shone upon her as soon as she saw them standing together. The parson knew nothing about it till the supper was over. Then, when the front door was open, and the farmers' daughters had been cautioned not to get themselves more wet than they could help in the falling snow, Maurice said a word to his future father-in-law. "She has consented at last, sir. I hope you have nothing to say against it."

"Not a word," said the parson, grasping the young man's hand, and remembering, as he did so, the extension of the time over which that phrase "at last" was supposed to spread itself.

Maurice had been promised some further opportunity of "talking about it," and of course claimed a fulfilment of the promise. There was a difficulty about it, as Isabel, having now been assured of her happiness, was anxious to talk about it all to her mother rather than to him; but he was imperative, and there came at last for him a quarter of an hour of delicious triumph in that very spot on which he had been so scolded for

saying that Christmas was a bore. "You were so very sudden," said Isabel, excusing herself for her conduct in the morning.

"But you did love me?"

"If I do now, that ought to be enough for you. But I did, and I've been so unhappy since; and I thought that, perhaps, you would never speak to me again. But it was all your fault; you were so sudden. And then you ought to have asked papa first,—you know you ought. But, Maurice, you will promise me one thing. You won't ever again say that Christmas Day is a bore!"

# Your Money or Your Life

## *A Tale of My Landlady*

*By* Wilkie Collins

From *The Belgravia Annual,* 1880

# Wilkie Collins

William Wilkie Collins (1824–1889) *suffered the misfortune of being born before his time. Not that he lived and died unknown and unappreciated,—he was for many years a partner and collaborator of Charles Dickens,—but in his day the vogue for crime fiction had not yet become a passion. The detective story was Collins's special gift, and I have no doubt that were he living today he would be the most popular English writer. This because among conventional plotters he would have the inestimable advantage of of being a writer. Few people who like a good mystery have not been captivated by* The Woman in White; *no one ever resisted* The Moonstone. *The latter is the masterpiece of the genre.*

*As poetry is the earliest, prose fiction seems to be the last development of a literature. Consequently, even many comparatively recent novelists are esteemed only for the "historical importance" of their works. That is a euphemistic way of saying that the technique is immature. Dr. Johnson remarked of the dog's trick of standing on its hind legs, that though it is not well done, it is surprising that it is done at all. One need not apologize for Wilkie Collins with such back-handed compliments.*

*"Your Money or Your Life"*[35] *does not deal with the detection of crime, though the unraveling of Mr. Cosway's secret and his wife's sinister stratagem makes it at least peripherally a mystery. Again there is too much plot, and it is all a bit hectic; but then, the author anticipates our objection.*

# Your Money or Your Life

## I

WE SHOULD all have enjoyed our visit to Sir John's country house—but for Mr. Cosway.

And to make matters worse, it was not Mr. Cosway but WE who were to blame. Our society repeated the old story of Adam and Eve, on a larger scale. The women were the first sinners; and the men were demoralised by the women.

Mr. Cosway's bitterest enemy could not have denied that he was a handsome, well-bred, unassuming man. No mystery of any sort attached to him. He had adopted the Navy as a profession—had grown weary of it after a few years' service—and now lived on the moderate income left to him, after the death of his parents. Out of this unpromising material the lively imaginations of the women built up a romance. The men only noticed that Mr. Cosway was rather silent and thoughtful; that he was not ready with his laugh; and that he had a fancy for taking long walks by himself. Harmless peculiarities, surely? And yet, they excited the curiosity of the women as signs of a mystery in Mr. Cosway's past life, in which some beloved object unknown must have played a chief part. When I asked my wife to explain what had led to this extraordinary conclusion, she answered with satirical emphasis, '*You* don't look below the surface: *we* do.'

As a matter of course the influence of the sex was tried, under every indirect and delicate form of approach, to induce Mr. Cosway to open his heart, and tell the tale of his sorrows. With the most perfect courtesy on that 'surface' of which my wife had spoken—and with the most immovable obstinacy under

it—he baffled curiosity, and kept his supposed secret to himself. The most beautiful girl in the house was, to my certain knowledge, ready to offer herself and her fortune as consolations, if this impenetrable bachelor would only have taken her into his confidence. He smiled sadly, and changed the subject.

Defeated so far, the women accepted the next alternative.

One of the guests staying in the house was Mr. Cosway's intimate friend—formerly his brother-officer on board ship. This gentleman was now subjected to the delicately directed system of investigation which had failed with his friend. With the most unruffled composure he referred the ladies, one after another, to Mr. Cosway. His name was Stone. The ladies decided that his nature was worthy of his name.

The last resource now left to our wives, daughters, and sisters was to rouse the dormant interest of the men, and to trust to the confidential intercourse of the smoking-room for the enlightenment which they had failed to obtain by other means.

They wisely began with the men who, in these modern days, are most easily reached by female influence—the men of mature age. Now, at last, my wife condescended to tell me what she and her friends had seen under 'the surface.' In plain words, they had collected evidence, by means of their maids, derived from the gossip in the servants' hall; and had then exercised their imaginations on the narrow field of discovery thus opened to them. The man that waited on Mr. Cosway had heard him sigh and grind his teeth in his sleep; and had caught him one morning, when he ought to have been shaving himself, kissing something which looked like a portrait in miniature. These mysterious circumstances and the conclusions to which they led, repeated with endless pertinacity, acquired a certain adventitious importance among us, due to the state of affairs in the house. The shooting was not good for much; the billiard-table was under repair; and there were but two accomplished

whist-players among the guests. In our idler moments, and on our showery days, we drifted into discussing the mystery of Mr. Cosway. The younger men, beginning by laughing at us, ended in catching the infection of our curiosity, for want of a nobler social epidemic in the house. Little by little, we became (I am ashamed to say) as eager as the women themselves to lead Mr. Cosway into making his confession. At a late sitting over our cigars, it was decided that one of us should inform this inoffensive gentleman that he was answerable for a state of nervous irritability among the guests, which it would be downright cruelty on his part to prolong. Thereupon, the inevitable question followed. Would any person, possessed of the necessary resources of polite circumlocution, volunteer to make this announcement on behalf of the rest? Nobody volunteering, we decided to select the victim by drawing lots. The lot fell upon me. On our next evening in the smoking-room, the disgrace of acknowledging to what extremities of ill-bred curiosity idleness and folly can lead persons holding the position of ladies and gentlemen, was to be mine.

I suffered under a sense of my responsibilities at intervals during the night; and, when we all met again in the morning, I brought a bad appetite with me to the breakfast-table. As we left our room, my wife tried to compose my mind. 'Don't worry yourself any more about it,' she said; 'leave it to luck.' I received this childish advice in sardonic silence. Before another hour had passed, it became my conjugal duty (and privilege) to express my gratitude and to make my apologies. Luck not only relieved me from all apprehension of offending Mr. Cosway, but actually used my wife as its chosen instrument!

The newspapers came in before we had risen from table. Our host handed one of them to my wife, who sat on his right hand.

She first looked, it is needless to say, at the list of births, deaths, and marriages; and then she turned to the general

news—the fires, accidents, fashionable departures, and so on. In a few minutes, she indignantly dropped the newspaper in her lap. 'Here is another unfortunate man,' she exclaimed,'sacrificed to the stupidity of women! If I had been in his place, I would have used my knowledge of swimming to save myself, and would have left the women to go to the bottom as they deserved!'

'A boat accident, I suppose?' said Sir John.

'Oh, yes—the old story. A gentleman takes two ladies out on the river. After a while they get fidgety, and feel an idiotic impulse to change places. The boat upsets as usual; the poor dear man tries to save them—and is drowned along with them for his pains. Shameful! shameful!'

'Are the names mentioned?'

'Yes. They are all strangers to me; I speak on principle.' Asserting herself in those words, my wife handed the newspaper to Mr. Cosway, who happened to sit next to her. 'When you were in the navy,' she continued, 'I dare say *your* life was put in jeopardy by taking women in boats. Read it yourself, and let it be a warning to you for the future.'

Mr. Cosway looked at the narrative of the accident—and revealed the romantic mystery of his life by a burst of devout exclamation, expressed in these words:

'Thank God, my wife's drowned!'

## II

To DECLARE we were all struck speechless, by discovering in this way that Mr. Cosway was a married man, is to say very little. The general impression appeared to be that he was mad. His neighbours at the table all drew back from him, with the one exception of his friend. Mr. Stone looked at the newspaper: pressed Mr. Cosway's hand in silent sympathy—and addressed himself to Sir John.

'Permit me to make my friend's apologies,' he said, 'until he is composed enough to act for himself. The circumstances are so extraordinary that I venture to think they excuse him. Will you allow us to speak to you privately?'

Our host, with more apologies addressed to his visitors, opened the door which communicated with his study. Mr. Stone took Mr. Cosway's arm, and led him out of the room. He noticed no one, spoke to no one—he moved mechanically, like a man walking in his sleep.

For nearly two hours, we were left to exercise our ingenuity in attempting to account for Mr. Cosway's wonderful outburst of gratitude at the drowning of his wife, and Mr. Stone's mysterious defence of him. At the end of the long interval, Sir John returned alone to the breakfast room. Mr. Cosway and Mr. Stone had already taken their departure for London, with their host's entire approval.

'It is left to my discretion,' Sir John proceeded, 'to repeat to you what I have heard in the study.' A general outcry interrupted the speaker. 'Oh, pray let us hear it!' Sir John smiled indulgently. 'You shall hear it,' he said, 'on one condition—that you all consider yourselves bound in honour not to mention the true names and the real places, when you tell the story to others.'

I cannot honestly say that the art of unfolding the intricacies of a narrative was one of the accomplishments possessed by the master of the house. It is no act of presumption on my part, if I here undertake to improve on our host's method of telling the story—using no other concealments than those which we all readily bound ourselves to observe. The events which preceded and followed Mr. Cosway's disastrous marriage resolve themselves, to my mind, into certain well-marked divisions. Following this arrangement, let me relate.

*The First Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life*

THE SAILING of her Majesty's ship 'Albicore' was deferred by the severe illness of the captain. A gentleman not possessed of political influence might, after the doctor's unpromising report of him, have been superseded by another commanding officer. In the present case, the Lords of the Admiralty showed themselves to be models of patience and sympathy. They kept the vessel in port, waiting the captain's recovery.

Among the unimportant junior officers, not wanted on board under these circumstances, and favoured accordingly by obtaining leave to wait for orders on shore, were two young men, aged respectively twenty-two and twenty-three years, and known by the names of Cosway and Stone. The scene which now introduces them opens at a famous seaport on the south coast of England, and discloses the two young gentlemen at dinner in a private room at their inn.

'I think that last bottle of champagne was corked,' Cosway remarked. 'Let's try another. You're nearest the bell, Stone. Ring.' Stone rang, under protest. He was the elder of the two by a year, and he set an example of discretion.

'I am afraid we are running up a terrible bill,' he said. 'We have been here more than three weeks—'

'And we have denied ourselves nothing,' Cosway added. 'We have lived like princes. Another bottle of champagne, waiter. We have our riding-horses, and our carriage, and the best box at the theatre, and such cigars as London itself could not produce. I call that making the most of life. Try the new bottle. Glorious drink, isn't it? Why doesn't my father have champagne at the family dinner-table?'

'Is your father a rich man, Cosway?'

'I should say not. He didn't give me anything like the money I expected, when I said good-bye—and I rather think he

warned me solemnly, at parting, to take the greatest care of it. "There's not a farthing more for you," he said, "till your ship returns from her South American station." *Your* father is a clergyman, Stone.'

'Well, and what of that?'

'And some clergymen are rich.'

'My father is not one of them, Cosway.'

'Then let us say no more about him. Help yourself, and pass the bottle.'

Instead of adopting this suggestion, Stone rose with a very grave face, and once more rang the bell. 'Ask the landlady to step up,' he said, when the waiter appeared.

'What do you want with the landlady?' Cosway inquired.

'I want the bill.'

The landlady—otherwise, Mrs. Pounce—entered the room. She was short, and old, and fat, and painted, and a widow. Students of character, as revealed in the face, would have discovered malice and cunning in her bright little black eyes, and a bitter vindictive temper in the lines about her thin red lips. Incapable of such subtleties of analysis as these, the two young officers differed widely, nevertheless, in their opinions of Mrs. Pounce. Cosway's reckless sense of humour delighted in pretending to be in love with her. Stone took a dislike to her from the first. When his friend asked for the reason, he made a strangely obscure answer. 'Do you remember that morning in the wood when you killed the snake?' he said. 'That's my reason.' Cosway made no further inquiries.

'Well, my young heroes,' cried Mrs. Pounce (always loud, always cheerful, and always familiar with her guests), 'what do you want with me now?'

'Take a glass of champagne, my darling,' said Cosway; 'and let me try if I can get my arm round your waist. That's all I want with you.'

The landlady passed this over without notice. Though she had spoken to both of them, her cunning little eyes rested on Stone from the moment when she appeared in the room. She knew by instinct the man who disliked her—and she waited deliberately for Stone to reply.

'We have been here some time,' he said, 'and we shall be obliged, ma'am, if you will let us have our bill.'

Mrs. Pounce lifted her eyebrows with an expression of innocent surprise.

'Has the captain got well, and must you go on board to-night?' she asked.

'Nothing of the sort!' Cosway interposed. 'We have no news of the captain, and we are going to the theatre tonight.'

'But,' persisted Stone, 'we want, if you please, to have the bill.'

'Certainly, sir,' said Mrs. Pounce, with a sudden assumption of respect. 'But we are very busy downstairs, and we hope you will not press us for it tonight?'

'Of course not!' cried Cosway.

Mrs. Pounce instantly left the room, without waiting for any further remark from Cosway's friend.

'I wish we had gone to some other house,' said Stone. 'You mark my words—that woman means to cheat us.'

Cosway expressed his dissent from this opinion in the most amiable manner. He filled his friend's glass, and begged him not to say ill-natured things of Mrs. Pounce.

But Stone's usually smooth temper seemed to be ruffled: he insisted on his own view. 'She's impudent and inquisitive, if she is not downright dishonest,' he said. 'What right had she to ask you where we lived when we were at home; and what our Christian names were; and which of us was oldest, you or I? Oh, yes—it's all very well to say she only showed a flattering interest in my affairs, when I woke a little earlier than

usual, and caught her in my bedroom with my pocket-book in her hand. Do you believe she was going to lock it up for safety's sake? She knows how much money we have got as well as we know it ourselves. Every halfpenny we have will be in her pocket to-morrow. And a good thing too—we shall be obliged to leave the house.'

Even this cogent reasoning failed in provoking Cosway to reply. He took Stone's hat, and handed it with the utmost politeness to his foreboding friend. 'There's only one remedy for such a state of mind as yours,' he said. 'Come to the theatre.'

At ten o'clock the next morning, Cosway found himself alone at the breakfast-table. He was informed that Mr. Stone had gone out for a little walk, and would be back directly. Seating himself at the table, he perceived an envelope on his plate, which evidently enclosed the bill. He took up the envelope, considered a little, and put it back again unopened. At the same moment Stone burst into the room in a high state of excitement.

'News that will astonish you!' he cried. 'The captain arrived yesterday evening. His doctors say that the sea-voyage will complete his recovery. The ship sails to-day—and we are ordered to report ourselves on board in an hour's time. Where's the bill?'

Cosway pointed to it. Stone took it out of the envelope.

It covered two sides of a prodigiously long sheet of paper. The sum-total was brightly decorated with lines of red ink. Stone looked at the total, and passed it in silence to Cosway. For once, even Cosway was prostrated. In dreadful stillness, the two young men produced their pocket-books; added up their joint stores of money, and compared the result with the bill. Their united resources amounted to a little more than one-third of their debt to the landlady of the inn.

The only alternative that presented itself was to send for

Mrs. Pounce; to state the circumstances plainly; and to propose a compromise on the grand commercial basis of credit.

Mrs. Pounce presented herself superbly dressed in walking costume. Was she going out? or had she just returned to the inn? Not a word escaped her; she waited gravely to hear what the gentlemen wanted. Cosway, presuming on his position as favourite, produced the contents of the two pocket-books, and revealed the melancholy truth.

'There is all the money we have,' he concluded. 'We hope you will not object to receive the balance in a bill at three months.'

Mrs. Pounce answered with a stern composure of voice and manner entirely new in the experience of Cosway and Stone.

'I have paid ready money, gentlemen, for the hire of your horses and carriages,' she said: 'here are the receipts from the livery stables to vouch for me; I never accept bills unless I am quite sure beforehand that they will be honoured. I defy you to find an overcharge in the account now rendered; and I expect you to pay it before you leave my house.'

Stone looked at his watch. 'In three-quarters of an hour,' he said, 'we must be on board.'

Mrs. Pounce entirely agreed with him. 'And if you are not on board,' she remarked, 'you will be tried by court-martial, and dismissed the service with your characters ruined for life.'

'My dear creature, we haven't time to send home, and we know nobody in the town,' pleaded Cosway. 'For God's sake, take our watches and jewelry, and our luggage—and let us go.'

'I am not a pawnbroker,' said the inflexible landlady. 'You must either pay your lawful debt to me in honest money, or—'

She paused and looked at Cosway. Her fat face brightened —she smiled graciously for the first time. Cosway stared at her in unconcealed perplexity. He helplessly repeated her last words. 'We must either pay the bill,' he said 'or—what?'

'Or,' answered Mrs. Pounce, 'one of you must marry ME.'

Was she joking? Was she intoxicated? Was she out of her senses? Neither of the three; she was in perfect possession of herself; her explanation was a model of lucid and convincing arrangement of facts.

'My position here has its drawbacks,' she began. 'I am a lone widow; I am known to have an excellent business, and to have saved money. The result is that I am pestered to death by a set of needy vagabonds who want to marry me. In this position, I am exposed to slanders and insults. Even if I didn't know that the men were after my money, there is not one of them whom I would venture to marry. He might turn out a tyrant, and beat me; or a drunkard, and disgrace me; or a betting man, and ruin me. What I want, you see, for my own peace and protection, is to be able to declare myself married, and to produce the proof in the shape of a certificate. A born gentleman, with a character to lose, and so much younger in years than myself that he wouldn't think of living with me—there is the sort of husband who suits my book! I'm a reasonable woman, gentlemen. I would undertake to part with my husband at the church door—never to attempt to see him or write to him afterwards—and only to show my certificate when necessary, without giving any explanation. Your secret would be quite safe in my keeping. I don't care a straw for either of you, so long as you answer my purpose. What do you say to paying my bill (one or the other of you) in this way? I am ready dressed for the altar; and the clergyman has notice at the church. My preference is for Mr. Cosway,' proceeded this terrible woman with the cruellest irony, 'because he has been so particular in his attentions towards me. The licence (which I provided on the chance a fortnight since) is made out in his name. Such is my weakness for Mr. Cosway. But that don't matter if Mr. Stone would like to take his place. He can

hail by his friend's name. Oh, yes, he can! I have consulted my lawyer. So long as the bride and bridegroom agree to it, they may be married in any name they like, and it stands good. Look at your watch again, Mr. Stone. The church is in the next street. By my calculation, you have just got five minutes to decide. I'm a punctual woman, my little dears; and I will be back to the moment.'

She opened the door, paused, and returned to the room. 'I ought to have mentioned,' she resumed, 'that I shall make you a present of the bill receipted, on the conclusion of the ceremony. You will be taken to the ship in my own boat, with all your money in your pockets, and a hamper of good things for the mess. After that, I wash my hands of you. You may go to the devil your own way.'

With this parting benediction, she left them.

Caught in the landlady's trap, the two victims looked at each other in expressive silence. Without time enough to take legal advice; without friends on shore; without any claim on officers of their own standing in the ship, the prospect before them was literally limited to Marriage or Ruin. Stone made a proposal worthy of a hero.

'One of us must marry her,' he said; 'I'm ready to toss up for it.'

Cosway matched him in generosity. 'No,' he answered. 'It was I who brought you here; and I who led you into these infernal expenses. I ought to pay the penalty—and I will.'

Before Stone could remonstrate, the five minutes expired. Punctual Mrs. Pounce appeared again in the doorway.

'Well?' she inquired, 'which is it to be—Cosway, or Stone?'

Cosway advanced as reckless as ever, and offered his arm.

'Now then, Fatsides,' he said, 'come and be married!'

In five-and-twenty minutes more, Mrs. Pounce had become Mrs. Cosway; and the two officers were on their way to the ship.

*The Second Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life*

FOUR YEARS ELAPSED before the 'Albicore' returned to the port from which she had sailed.

In that interval, the deaths of Cosway's parents had taken place. The lawyer who managed his affairs during his absence from England wrote to inform him that his inheritance from his late father's 'estate' was eight hundred a year. His mother only possessed a life interest in her fortune; she had left her jewels to her son, and that was all.

Cosway's experience of the life of a naval officer on a foreign station (without political influence to hasten his promotion) had thoroughly disappointed him. He decided on retiring from the service when the ship was 'paid off.' In the mean time, to the astonishment of his comrades, he seemed to be in no hurry to make use of the leave granted him to go on shore. The faithful Stone was the only man on board who knew that he was afraid of meeting his 'wife.' This good friend volunteered to go to the inn, and make the necessary investigation with all needful prudence. 'Four years is a long time, at *her* age,' he said. 'Many things may happen in four years.'

An hour later, Stone returned to the ship, and sent a written message on board, addressed to his brother-officer, in these words: 'Pack up your things at once, and join me in the boat.'

'What news?' asked the anxious husband.

Stone looked significantly at the boatmen, and only answered, 'Wait till we get on shore.'

'Where are we going?'

'To the railway station.'

They got into an empty carriage; and Stone at once relieved his friend of all further suspense.

'Nobody is acquainted with the secret of your marriage but our two selves,' he began quietly. 'I don't think, Cosway, you need go into mourning.'

'You don't mean to say she's dead!'

'I have seen the letter which announces her death,' Stone replied. 'It was so short that I believe I can repeat it, word for word:—"Dear Sir—We have received information of the death of our client. Please address your next and last payment, on account of the lease and goodwill of the inn, to the executors of the late Mrs. Cosway." There, that is the letter. "Dear Sir," means the proprietor of the inn. He told me your wife's previous history in two words. After carrying on the business with her customary intelligence for more than three years, her health failed, and she went to London to consult a physician. There she remained under the doctor's care. The next event was the appearance of an agent, instructed to sell the business in consequence of the landlady's declining health. Add the death at a later time—and there is the begining and the end of the story. Fortune owed you a good turn, Cosway—and Fortune has paid the debt. Accept my best congratulations.'

Arrived in London, Stone went on at once to his relations in the North. Cosway proceeded to the office of the family lawyer (Mr. Atherton), who had taken care of his interests in his absence. His father and Mr. Atherton had been school-fellows and old friends. He was affectionately received, and was invited to pay a visit the next day to the lawyer's villa at Richmond.

'You will be near enough to London to attend to your business at the Admiralty,' said Mr. Atherton, 'and you will meet a visitor at my house, who is one of the most charming girls in England—the only daughter of the great Mr. Restall. Good heavens! have you never heard of him? My dear sir, he's one of the partners in the famous firm of Benshaw, Restall, and Benshaw.'

Cosway was wise enough to accept this last piece of information as quite conclusive. The next day, Mrs. Atherton pre-

sented him to the charming Miss Restall; and Mrs. Atherton's young married daughter (who had been his playfellow when they were children) whispered to him, half in jest, half in earnest, 'Make the best use of your time; she isn't engaged yet.'

Cosway shuddered inwardly at the bare idea of a second marriage. Was Miss Restall the sort of woman to restore his confidence?

She was small and slim and dark—a graceful, well-bred, brightly intelligent person, with a voice exquisitely sweet and winning in tone. Her ears, hands, and feet were objects to worship; and she had an attraction, irresistibly rare among the women of the present time—the attraction of a perfectly natural smile. Before Cosway had been an hour in the house, she discovered that his long term of service on foreign stations had furnished him with subjects of conversation which favourably contrasted with the commonplace gossip addressed to her by other men. Cosway at once became a favourite, as Othello became a favourite in his day. The ladies of the household all rejoiced in the young officer's success, with the one exception of Miss Restall's companion (supposed to hold the place of her lost mother, at a large salary), one Mrs. Margery. Too cautious to commit herself in words, this lady expressed doubt and disapprobation by her looks. She had white hair, iron-grey eyebrows, and protuberant eyes; her looks were unusually expressive. One evening, she caught poor Mr. Atherton alone, and consulted him confidentially on the subject of Mr. Cosway's income. This was the first warning which opened the eyes of the good lawyer to the nature of the 'friendship' already established between his two guests. He knew Miss Restall's illustrious father well, and he feared that it might soon be his disagreeable duty to bring Cosway's visit to an end.

On a certain Saturday afternoon, while Mr. Atherton was still considering how he could most kindly and delicately sug-

gest to Cosway that it was time to say good-bye, an empty carriage arrived at the villa. A note from Mr. Restall was delivered to Mrs. Atherton, thanking her with perfect politeness for her kindness to his daughter. 'Circumstances,' he added, 'rendered it necessary that Miss Restall should return home that afternoon.'

The 'circumstances' were supposed to refer to a garden-party to be given by Mr. Restall in the ensuing week. But why was his daughter wanted home before the day of the party?

The ladies of the family entertained no doubt that Mrs. Margery had privately communicated with Mr. Restall, and that the appearance of the carriage was the natural result. Mrs. Atherton's married daughter did all that could be done: she got rid of Mrs. Margery for one minute, and so arranged it that Cosway and Miss Restall took leave of each other in her own sitting-room. The young lady appeared in the hall with her veil down. Cosway escaped to the road and saw the last of the carriage as it drove away. In little more than a fortnight, his horror of a second marriage had become one of the dead and buried emotions of his nature. He stayed at the villa until Monday morning, as an act of gratitude to his good friends, and then accompanied Mr. Atherton to London. Business at the Admiralty was the excuse. It imposed on nobody. He was evidently on his way to Miss Restall.

'Leave your business in my hands,' said the lawyer, on the journey to town, 'and go and amuse yourself on the Continent. I can't blame you for falling in love with Miss Restall; I ought to have foreseen the danger, and waited till she had left us before I invited you to my house. But I may at least warn you to carry the matter no further. If you had eight thousand instead of eight hundred a year, Mr. Restall would think it an act of presumption on your part to aspire to his daughter's hand, unless you had a title to throw into the bargain. Look at it in

the true light, my dear boy; and one of these days you will thank me for speaking plainly.'

Cosway promised to 'look at it in the true light.'

The result, from his point of view, led him into a change of residence. He left his hotel and took a lodging in the nearest by-street to Mr. Restall's palace at Kensington. On the same evening, he applied (with the confidence due to a previous arrangement) for a letter at the neighbouring postoffice, addressed to E. C.—the initials of Edwin Cosway. 'Pray be careful,' Miss Restall wrote; 'I have tried to get you a card for our garden-party. But that hateful creature, Margery, has evidently spoken to my father; I am not trusted with any invitation cards. Bear it patiently, dear, as I do, and let me hear if you have succeeded in finding a lodging near us.'

Not submitting to this first disappointment very patiently, Cosway sent his reply to the post-office, addressed to A. R.—the initials of Adela Restall. The next day, the impatient lover applied for another letter. It was waiting for him, but it was not directed in Adela's handwriting. Had their correspondence been discovered? He opened the letter in the street; and read, with amazement, these lines:—

'Dear Mr. Cosway, my heart sympathises with two faithful lovers, in spite of my age and my duty. I enclose an invitation to the party to-morrow. Pray don't betray me, and don't pay too marked attention to Adela. Discretion is easy. There will be twelve hundred guests. Your friend, in spite of appearances, Louisa Margery.'

How infamously they had all misjudged this excellent woman! Such was the natural conclusion at which Cosway arrived. He went to the party a grateful, as well as a happy, man. The first persons known to him, whom he discovered among the crowd of strangers, were the Athertons. They looked, as well they might, astonished to see him. Fidelity to Mrs. Mar-

gery forbade him to enter into any explanations. Where was that best and truest friend? With some difficulty he succeeded in finding her. Was there any impropriety in seizing her hand, and cordially pressing it? The result of this expression of gratitude was, to say the least of it, perplexing. Mrs. Margery behaved like the Athertons! She looked astonished to see him, and she put precisely the same question, 'How did you get here?' Cosway could only conclude that she was joking. 'Who should know that, dear lady, better than yourself?' he rejoined. 'I don't understand you,' Mrs. Margery answered sharply. After a moment's reflection, Cosway hit on another solution of the mystery. Visitors were near them; and Mrs. Margery had made her own private use of one of Mr. Restall's invitation cards. She might have serious reasons for pushing caution to its last extreme. Cosway looked at her significantly. 'The least I can do is not to be indiscreet,' he whispered—and left her.

He turned into a side walk; and there he met Adela at last!

It seemed like a fatality. *She* looked astonished; and *she* said, 'How did you get here?' No intrusive visitors were within hearing, this time. 'My dear!' Cosway remonstrated, 'Mrs. Margery must have told you, when she sent me my invitation.' Adela turned pale. 'Mary Margery?' she repeated. 'Mrs. Margery has said nothing to me; Mrs. Margery detests you. We must have this cleared up. No; not now—I must attend to our guests. Expect a letter; and, for heaven's sake, Edwin, keep out of my father's way. One of our visitors whom he particularly wished to see has sent an excuse—and he is dreadfully angry about it.'

She left him before Cosway could explain that he and Mr. Restall had thus far never seen each other.

He wandered away towards the extremity of the grounds, troubled by vague suspicions; hurt at Adela's cold reception

of him. Entering a shrubbery, which seemed intended to screen the grounds, at this point, from a lane outside, he suddenly discovered a pretty little summer-house among the trees. A stout gentleman, of mature years, was seated alone in this retreat. He looked up with a frown. Cosway apologised for disturbing him, and entered into conversation as an act of politeness.

'A brilliant assembly to-day, sir.'

The stout gentleman replied by an inarticulate sound—something between a grunt and a cough.

'And a splendid house and grounds,' Cosway continued.

The stout gentleman repeated the inarticulate sound.

Cosway began to feel amused. Was this curious old man deaf and dumb?

'Excuse my entering into conversation,' he persisted. 'I feel like a stranger here. There are so many people whom I don't know!'

The stout gentleman suddenly burst into speech. Cosway had touched a sympathetic fibre at last.

'There are a good many people here whom *I* don't know,' he said gruffly. 'You are one of them. What's your name?'

'My name is Cosway, sir. What's yours?'

The stout gentleman rose with fury in his looks. He burst out with an oath; and added the intolerable question, already three times repeated by others, 'How did you get here?' The tone was even more offensive than the oath. 'Your age protects you, sir,' said Cosway, with the loftiest composure. 'I'm sorry I gave my name to so rude a person.'

'Rude?' shouted the old gentleman. 'You want my name in return, I suppose? You young puppy, you shall have it! My name is Restall.'

He turned his back, and walked off. Cosway took the only course now open to him. He returned to his lodgings.

The next day, no letter reached him from Adela. He went to

the post-office. No letter was there. The day wore on to evening—and, with the evening, there appeared a woman who was a stranger to him. She looked like a servant; and she was the bearer of a mysterious message.

'Please be at the door that opens on the lane, at ten o'clock to-morrow morning. Knock three times at the door—and then say "Adela." Someone who wishes you well will be alone in the shrubbery, and will let you in. No, sir! I am not to take anything; and I am not to say a word more.' She spoke and vanished.

Cosway was punctual to his appointment. He knocked three times; he pronounced Miss Restall's Christian name. Nothing happened. He waited a while, and tried again. This time Adela's voice answered strangely from the shrubbery in tones of surprise:—'Edwin! is it really you?'

'Did you expect anyone else?' Cosway asked. 'My darling, your message said ten o'clock—and here I am.'

The door was suddenly unlocked.

'I sent no message,' said Adela as they confronted each other on the threshold.

In the silence of utter bewilderment they went together into the summer-house. At Adela's request, Cosway repeated the message, and described the woman who had delivered it. The description applied to no person known to Miss Restall. 'Mrs. Margery never sent you the invitation; and I repeat, I never sent you the message. This meeting has been arranged by some one who knows that I always walk in the shrubbery after breakfast. There is some underhand work going on—' She checked herself, and considered a little. 'Is it possible—?' she began, and paused again. Her eyes filled with tears. 'My mind is so completely upset,' she said, 'that I can't think clearly of anything. Oh, Edwin, we have had a happy dream, and it has come to an end. My father knows more than we think for.

Some friends of ours are going abroad to-morrow—and I am to go with them. Nothing I can say has the least effect upon my father. He means to part us for ever—and this is his cruel way of doing it!'

She put her arm round Cosway's neck, and lovingly laid her head on his shoulder. With tenderest kisses they reiterated their vows of eternal fidelity until their voices faltered and failed them. Cosway filled up the pause by the only useful suggestion which it was now in his power to make—he proposed an elopement.

Adela received this bold solution of the difficulty in which they were placed, exactly as thousands of other young ladies have received similar proposals before her time, and after.

She first said positively No. Cosway persisted. She began to cry, and asked if he had no respect for her. Cosway declared that his respect was equal to any sacrifice, except the sacrifice of parting with her for ever. He could, and would, if she preferred it, die for her, but while he was alive he must refuse to give her up. Upon this, she shifted her ground. Did he expect her to go away with him alone? Certainly not. Her maid could go with her, or, if her maid was not to be trusted, he would apply to his landlady, and engage 'a respectable elderly person' to attend on her until the day of their marriage. Would she have some mercy on him, and just consider it? No: she was afraid to consider it. Did she prefer misery for the rest of her life? Never mind *his* happiness: it was *her* happiness only that he had in his mind. Travelling with unsympathetic people; absent from England, no one could say for how long; married, when she did return, to some rich man whom she hated—would she, could she contemplate that prospect? She contemplated it through tears; she contemplated it to an accompaniment of sighs, kisses, and protestations—she trembled, hesitated, gave way. At an appointed hour of the coming night, when her father

would be in the smoking-room, and Mrs. Margery would be in bed, Cosway was to knock at the door in the lane once more; leaving time to make all the necessary arrangements in the interval.

The one pressing necessity, under these circumstances, was to guard against the possibility of betrayal and surprise. Cosway discreetly alluded to the unsolved mysteries of the invitation and the message.

'Have you taken anybody into our confidence?' he asked.

Adela answered with some embarrassment. 'Only one person,' she said—'dear Miss Benshaw.'

'Who is Miss Benshaw?'

'Don't you really know, Edwin? She is richer even than papa—she has inherited from her late brother one half-share in the great business in the City. Miss Benshaw is the lady who disappointed papa by not coming to the garden party. I was very miserable, dear, when they took me away from Mr. Atherton's. She happened to call the next day, and she noticed it. "My dear," she said (Miss Benshaw is quite an elderly lady now), "I am an old maid, who has missed the happiness of her life through not having had a friend to guide and advise me when I was young. Are you suffering as I once suffered?" She spoke so nicely—and I was so wretched—that I really couldn't help it. I opened my heart to her.'

Cosway looked grave. 'Are you sure she is to be trusted?' he asked.

'Perfectly sure.'

'Perhaps, my love, she has spoken about us (not meaning any harm) to some friend of hers? Old ladies are so fond of gossip. It's just possible—don't you think so?'

Adela hung her head. 'I have thought it just possible myself,' she admitted. 'There is plenty of time to call on her to-day. I will set our doubts at rest, before Miss Benshaw goes out for her afternoon drive.'

On that understanding they parted.

Towards evening, Cosway's arrangements for the elopement were completed. He was eating his solitary dinner when a note was brought to him. It had been left at the door by a commissioner. The man had gone away without waiting for an answer. The note ran thus:—

'Miss Benshaw presents her compliments to Mr. Cosway, and will be obliged if he can call on her at nine o'clock this evening, on business which concerns himself.'

This invitation was evidently the result of Adela's visit earlier in the day. Cosway presented himself at the house, troubled by natural emotions of anxiety and suspense. His reception was not of a nature to compose him. He was shown into a darkened room. The one lamp on the table was turned down low, and the little light thus given was still further obscured by a shade. The corners of the room were in almost absolute darkness.

A voice out of one of the corners addressed him in a whisper:

'I must beg you to excuse the darkened room. I am suffering from a severe cold. My eyes are inflamed, and my throat is so bad that I can only speak in a whisper. Sit down, sir. I have got news for you.'

'Not bad news, I hope, ma'am?' Cosway ventured to inquire.

'The worst possible news,' said the whispering voice. 'You have an enemy striking at you in the dark.'

Cosway asked who it was, and received no answer. He varied the form of inquiry, and asked why the unnamed person struck at him in the dark. The experiment succeeded; he obtained a reply.

'It is reported to me,' said Miss Benshaw, 'that the person thinks it necessary to give you a lesson, and takes a spiteful pleasure in doing it as mischievously as possible. The person, as I happen to know, sent you your invitation to the party,

and made the appointment which took you to the door in the lane. Wait a little, sir; I have not done yet. The person has put it into Mr. Restall's head to send his daughter abroad to-morrow.'

Cosway attempted to make her speak more plainly.

'Is the person a man or a woman?' he said.

Miss Benshaw proceeded without noticing the interruption.

'You needn't be afraid, Mr. Cosway; Miss Restall will not leave England. Your enemy is all-powerful. Your enemy's object could only be to provoke you into planning an elopement —and, your arrangements once completed, to part you and Miss Restall quite as effectually as if you were at opposite ends of the world. Spiteful, isn't it? And, what is worse, the mischief is as good as done already.'

Cosway rose from his chair.

'Do you wish for any further explanation?' asked Miss Benshaw.

'One thing more,' he replied. 'Does Adela know of this?'

'No,' said Miss Benshaw; 'it is left to you to tell her.'

There was a moment of silence. Cosway looked at the lamp. Once roused, as usual with men of his character, his temper was not to be trifled with.

'Miss Benshaw,' he said, 'I dare say you think me a fool; but I can draw my own conclusion, for all that. *You* are my enemy.'

The only reply was a low chuckling laugh. All voices can be more or less effectually disguised by a whisper—but a laugh carries the revelation of its own identity with it. Cosway suddenly threw off the shade over the lamp, and turned the wick.

The light flooded the room, and showed him—His Wife.

### *The Third Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life*

THREE DAYS had passed. Cosway sat alone in his lodging—pale and worn: the shadow already of his former self.

He had not seen Adela since the discovery. The one way in which he could venture to make the inevitable disclosure was by letter. Through Mr. Atherton (to whom he had at once revealed his position) he was able to make inquiries at Mr. Restall's house. The answers simply informed him that Miss Restall was suffering from illness.

The landlady came into the room. 'Cheer up, sir,' said the good woman. 'There is better news of Miss Restall to-day.'

He raised his head. 'Don't trifle with me!' he answered fretfully; 'tell me exactly what the servant said.'

The landlady repeated the words. Miss Restall had passed a quieter night, and had been able for a few hours to leave her room. He asked next if any letter had arrived for him. No letter had arrived. If Adela definitely abstained from writing to him, the conclusion would be too plain to be mistaken. She had given him up—and who could blame her? There was a knock at the street-door. The landlady looked out. 'Here's Mr. Stone come back, sir!' she exclaimed joyfully—and hurried away to let him in. Cosway never looked up when his friend appeared.

'I knew I should succeed,' said Stone. 'I have seen your wife.'

'Don't speak of her!' cried Cosway. 'I should have murdered her when I first saw her face, if I had not instantly left the house. I may be the death of the wretch yet, if you persist in speaking of her!'

Stone put his hand kindly on his friend's shoulder.

'Must I remind you that you owe something to your old companion?' he asked. 'I left my father and mother, the morning I got your letter—and my one thought has been to serve you. Reward me. Be a man, and hear what it is your right and duty to know. After that, if you like, we will never refer to her again.'

Cosway took his hand, in silent acknowledgment that he was right. They sat down together. Stone began.

'She is so entirely shameless,' he said, 'that I had no difficulty in getting her to speak. She so cordially hates you that she glories in her own falsehood and treachery. In the first place, I may tell you that she has a certain right, if she pleases, to call herself "Miss Benshaw." She is really the daughter of the man who founded the great house in the City. With every advantage that wealth and position could give her, the perverse creature married one of her father's footmen. From that moment her family discarded her. With the money procured by the sale of her jewels, her husband took the inn which we have such bitter cause to remember—and she carried it on after his death. So much for the past. We may now pass over a long lapse of years, and get to the time at which you and I were on the South American station, beginning to think of the happy day when our ship would be ordered back to England. At the date at which we have now arrived, the last surviving member of her family—her elder brother—lay at the point of death. He had taken his father's place in the business, besides inheriting his father's fortune. The loss of his wife (leaving no children) rendered it necessary that he should alter his will. He deferred performing this duty. It was only at the time of his last illness that he had dictated instructions for a new will, leaving his wealth (excepting certain legacies to old friends) to the hospitals of Great Britain and Ireland. His lawyer lost no time in carrying out the instructions. The new will was ready for signature (the old will having been destroyed by his own hand), when the doctors sent a message to say that their patient was insensible, and might die in that condition. He did die in that condition. Your wretched wife, as next-of-kin, succeeded, not only to the fortune, but (under the deed of partnership) to her brother's place in the firm: on the one easy condition of resuming the family name. She calls herself "Miss Benshaw." But as a matter of legal necessity she is set down in the deed

as "Mrs. Cosway Benshaw." Her partners only now know that her husband is living, and that you are the Cosway whom she privately married. Will you take a little breathing-time? or shall I go on, and get done with it?'

Cosway signed to him to go on.

'She doesn't in the least care,' Stone proceeded, 'for the exposure. "I'm the head partner," she says, "and the rich one of the firm; they daren't turn their backs on Me." You remember the information I received—in perfect good faith on his part—from the man who now keeps the inn? The visit to the London doctor, and the assertion of failing health, were adopted as the best means of plausibly severing the lady's connection (the great lady now!) with a calling so unworthy of her as the keeping of an inn. Her neighbours at the seaport were all deceived by the stratagem, with two exceptions. They were both men—vagabonds who had pertinaciously tried to delude her into marrying them in the days when she was a widow. They refused to believe in the doctor and the declining health; they had their own suspicion of the motives which had led to the sale of the inn, under very unfavourable circumstances; and they decided on going to London, inspired by the same base hope of making discoveries which might be turned into a means of extorting money. Their contemplated victim proved equal to the emergency. The attorney whom she had employed to manage the sale of the lease and goodwill of the inn was not above accepting a handsome private fee. He wrote to the new landlord of the inn, falsely announcing his client's death, in the letter which I repeated to you in the railway carriage on our journey to London; and he deluded the two inferior rogues, when they ventured to make inquiry at his office. You and I were deceived, in our turn, by the lawyer's letter. Your natural conclusion that you were free to pay your addresses to Miss Restall, and the poor young lady's innocent confidence in

"Miss Benshaw's" sympathy, gave this unscrupulous woman the means of playing the heartless trick on you which is now exposed. Malice and jealousy—I have it, mind, from herself!—were not her only motives. "But for that Cosway," she said (I spare you the epithet which she put before your name), "with my money and position, I might have married a needy lord, and sunned myself in my old age in the full blaze of the peerage." Do you understand how she hated you, now? Enough of this subject! The moral of it, my dear Cosway, is to leave this place, and try what change of scene will do for you. I have time to spare; and I will go abroad with you. When shall it be?'

'Let me wait a day or two more,' Cosway pleaded.

Stone shook his head. 'Still hoping, my poor friend, for a line from Miss Restall? You distress me.'

'I am sorry to distress you, Stone. If I can get one pitying word from *her*, I can submit to the miserable life that lies before me.'

'Are you not expecting too much?'

'You wouldn't say so, if you were as fond of her as I am.'

They were silent. The evening slowly darkened; and the landlady came in as usual with the candles. She brought with her a letter for Cosway.

He tore it open; read it in an instant; and devoured it with kisses. His highly wrought feelings found their vent in a little allowable exaggeration. 'She has saved my life!' he said, as he handed the letter to Stone.

It only contained these lines:—

'My love is yours, my promise is yours. Through all trouble, through all profanation, through the hopeless separation that may be before us in this world, I live yours—and die yours. My Edwin, God bless and comfort you.'

*The Fourth Epoch in Mr. Cosway's Life*

THE SEPARATION had lasted for nearly two years, when Cosway and Stone paid that visit to the country house which is recorded at the outset of the present narrative. In the interval, nothing had been heard of Miss Restall, except through Mr. Atherton. He reported that Adela was leading a very quiet life. The one remarkable event had been an interview between 'Miss Benshaw' and herself. No other person had been present; but the little that was reported placed Miss Restall's character above all praise. She had forgiven the woman who had so cruelly injured her!

The two friends, it may be remembered, had travelled to London, immediately after completing the fullest explanation of Cosway's startling behaviour at the breakfast-table. Stone was not by nature a sanguine man. 'I don't believe in our luck,' he said. 'Let us be quite sure that we are not the victims of another deception.'

The accident had happened on the Thames; and the newspaper narrative proved to be accurate in every respect. Stone personally attended the inquest. From a natural feeling of delicacy towards Adela, Cosway hesitated to write to her on the subject. The ever-helpful Stone wrote in his place.

After some delay, the answer was received. It enclosed a brief statement (communicated officially by legal authority) of a last act of malice on the part of the late head-partner in the house of Benshaw and Company. She had not died intestate, like her brother. The first clause of her will contained the testator's grateful recognition of Adela Restall's Christian act of forgiveness. The second clause (after stating that there were neither relatives nor children to be benefited by the will) left Adela Restall mistress of Mrs. Cosway Benshaw's fortune —on the one merciless condition that she did *not* marry Edwin

Cosway. The third clause—if Adela Restall violated the condition—handed over the whole of the money to the firm in the City, 'for the extension of the business, and the benefit of the surviving partners.'

Some months later, Adela came of age. To the indignation of Mr. Restall, and the astonishment of the 'Company,' the money actually went to the firm. The fourth epoch in Mr. Cosway's life witnessed his marriage to a woman who cheerfully paid half a million of money for the happiness of passing her life, on eight hundred a year, with the man whom she loved.

But Cosway felt bound in gratitude to make a rich woman of his wife, if work and resolution could do it. When Stone last spoke of him, he was reading for the Bar; and Mr. Atherton was waiting to give him his first brief.

Note:—That 'most improbable' part of the present narrative, which is contained in the division called The First Epoch, is founded on an adventure which actually occurred to no less a person than a cousin of Sir Walter Scott. In Lockhart's delightful 'Life,' the anecdote will be found as told by Sir Walter to Captain Basil Hall. The remainder of the present story is entirely imaginary. The writer wondered what such a woman as the landlady would do, under certain given circumstances, after her marriage—and here is the result.

# Garry Owen; or, The Snow-Woman

*By* Miss [Maria] Edgeworth

From *The Christmas Box*, 1829

# Maria Edgeworth

MARIA EDGEWORTH (1767-1849) *is still a name to conjure with. This distinction she earns by virtue of the durable qualities of accurate observation and rich humor shown in* CASTLE RACKRENT (1802) *and other fiction of the Irish peasantry. Without the least affectation of sentiment or "fine writing" she transcribed the humble lives of the poor and oppressed tenantry. So telling were her chronicles that Sir Walter Scott prefaced his career with the hope that he might some day do for Scotland what Maria Edgeworth had done for Ireland.*

*Besides her novels of social import Miss Edgeworth devoted much literary energy to the development of a new technique, the children's story. The tales were published in such purposeful volumes as* THE PARENTS' ASSISTANT *and* EARLY LESSONS, *and proved so tremendously popular that Miss Edgeworth was known more widely as the author of successful juvenilia than as a master of serious fiction. So many pale imitators entered the lists, however, that when the annuals challenged one another for the juvenile field all were unhorsed in the mad and futile contest.*

*The best of the children's annuals was* THE CHRISTMAS BOX, *edited by the distinguished Irish antiquary and folklorist, Thomas Crofton Croker, and numbering among its brilliant contributors Scott, Tom Moore, Miss Mitford, and Miss Edgeworth. "Garry Owen" is a typical Edgeworthian "moral tale," too obviously didactic for modern taste, yet somehow appealing in its simplicity and directness.*

# Garry Owen; or, The Snow-Woman

## PART I

### CHAPTER I—*Snipe-Shooting*

"A FINE MORNING for snipe-shooting, this, Master Gerald!" said Patrick Carroll, an Irish gamekeeper, to his young companion, his master's son, who was manfully stepping along beside him on the frozen surface of a deep snow.

"A fine morning certainly, Carroll; but I have not seen a single snipe yet," said Master Gerald.

"But if we have any luck, we won't be long so," replied the gamekeeper, "barring the long snow might have starved off the birds entirely. But if there's one left in it any way, we'll have him, dear, as sure as life."

"There's one!" cried Gerald.

Pop—and—miss.

"Hush't now!—whisht! 'Twas the talking—Not a word now—or ye give the birds warning."

They walked on for some time without speaking. Gerald

> "Gazed idly on the silence of the snows.
> ——————————One idiot face of white
> Is over all."

Not another snipe was to be seen; and the gamekeeper, thinking that his young master was fretting inwardly, began to comfort him with a little flattery.

"Then, Master Gerald, my dear, when you come to carry the gun your own self, it's a fine shot you'll be, I'll engage—as fine

a shot as any in the three counties, as his honour your father (blessings on him!) was afore you. Just such another as yourself, then, I remember him, the first season's shooting ever he got—I saw his first shot sure!"

"He was older at that time than I am now, was not he?" said Gerald.

"Not to look at; and I'm certain clear he was not over fourteen years any way."

"I shall be fourteen next birthday; and I hope my mother will then have no objection to my carrying the gun myself."

"Objections! Why would she?—Tut—The next bird we meet, good or bad, you shall have a shot at him yourself, master."

A ray of joy came across Gerald's face, but it passed away. "No," said he, "I promised mamma I would not take the gun in my own hands."

"Then it's I must lay it over your shoulder, and hold it for you while you pop."

A bird was seen. The gamekeeper placed the gun against Gerald's shoulder, and pointed to where he should aim. It was a great temptation—but Gerald had given a promise. He stepped aside, drawing his shoulder from under the gun.

"No, Carroll," repeated he firmly, and it was as much as he could say. "I will not fire, for I yesterday promised my mother I would not."

"Then you are a noble young gentleman to be true to your mother any way; and I'm sure, by the same token, you'll not tell on me, that was only wanting to please you, and did not understand rightly, or I'd sooner have cut my hand off than have gone again any thing the mistress would say—in regard to you more than all. It would be as much as my life's worth if you were to tell on me, Master Gerald; but I know you are too good."

"Never fear," said Gerald, "I am no tell-tale. But I'm getting

terribly hungry. Turn down to that cottage, and may be we shall find a hot potato."

"True for you. It is time they should be boiling or boiled—and no doubt it is here we shall find 'em ready and welcome, for it is Mistress Crofton's place, and a very snug place it is, and right good people they are. The mother nursed some of the big house formerly; that is, kind-hearted old Mistress Molly I mean."

### Chapter II—*Mrs. Crofton's Cottage*

Their steps being noiseless on the snow, they reached the cottage without being heard by any one within. Peeping in at the house door, Gerald saw that there was only kind-hearted Molly herself in the kitchen. Her back was towards them, and she was stooping down, covering up a dish that was on the hearth before a clear turf fire. Gerald, putting his finger on his lips, and making a sign to the gamekeeper to remain still at the door, went in on tiptoe softly, and snatching up from the dresser her silk handkerchief, he went close behind her without her perceiving him, quickly threw the handkerchief over her eyes, and, in a feigned gruff brogue, asked her to tell who he was?

"Ah hushlamacree! you darling rogue, I know who ye are well enough—and glad myself is you're come—long I've been looking for you."

She pulled off the bandage as she spoke.

"Oh! Master Gerald dear! and is it you?—I ask your pardon then. Sure I'm glad to see you, Master Gerald."

It was plain, nevertheless, that he was not the person she expected to see. "But who was your darling rogue that you were looking for, Molly?"

"Oh! not your honour dear any way—sure—I could not make so free—but Georgy the gran' child—the unlucky boy that did not get his breakfast yet—that's what I was covering up for him."

"And suppose I was to beg one of his hot potatoes?"

"Welcome as life, dear!" said she, uncovering them; "and shame take me that didn't think of offering them. But my ould stupid head was just astray. Sit ye down, Master Gerald, by the fire this raw morning, till I fetch you the salt, and a bit o' butter, and a drop of the new milk.—And who would that be?—somebody at the door without?—Oh! Mr. Carroll the gamekeeper, it is you!—But won't you step in, and get an air of the fire, and take something too? I should have a bottle somewhere."

In Molly's hospitality there was a degree of hurry and confusion, and not her usual hearty gladness to see her friends. Gerald asked what was the matter, and why her head was astray?

"It's after the boy George my head is," she answered; "that unlucky slip of a boy—though it's no fault of his—but of them that left the stable door open after he had shut it last night. I don't know who it was, but, weary on them! for this morning George missed one of them sheep of his father's that he got in charge, and was at my bedside by peep o' day, telling me about it afore I was right awake. In great fear he was that this sheep, straying out in the deep snow, might be lost, and that his father, when he'd find it out, would be mad with him. Then don't be bothering me, child! said I, and I dreaming. Take yourself out, and look for the sheep, can't ye?—Bad luck to myself that said that cross word out o' my sleep, for straight the boy went out in the first gray light o' the morning, and never has been in since, good or bad. There's the two bowls of stirabout I made for him got as hard and colder than the stones; I was fain to throw them out to the chickens both. And now I have boiled these potatoes for him. But what I'm in dread of," continued Molly, after a pause, and as if afraid to speak her whole thoughts, "what I am most in dread of is them snowdrifts there below, in case George might have come across one

of them.—You mind, Master Gerald, the boy that once was lost entirely—and the snow so deep on the ground now"—She sighed—

Gerald swallowed hastily the bit of hot potato he had in his mouth, and asked which road the boy had taken?

"Across the Curragh path (she believed), and down by the *boreen*" (the lane).

Gerald, beckoning to the gamekeeper, ran out immediately, bidding Molly to keep up her spirits, and keep the potatoes hot for her boy, whom he hoped soon to bring back to her, with, perhaps, the lost sheep into the bargain.

Thousands of blessings she poured upon Gerald and Mr. Carroll, and from her door she shouted after them to beg they would "bid George never to mind the sheep, but come home only with himself. Tell him I'll make it up out o' my calves to the father. I'd sell the cow—I'd sell the dresser—any thing—all, tell him, if he'll but come home to me safe again—*acushla!*"

## Chapter III—*The Snow-Drift*

Gerald and the gamekeeper, no longer thinking of snipes, took the way over the curragh as well as they could make it out, for path there was none on that unbeaten snow. The surface was still hard enough in many places; but, during the last hour, it had begun to thaw, and some of the drifts were softened. They looked for the boy's footsteps, and saw traces for some distance, but then lost sight of them when they came to a lane leading to the village. In this lane horses, and cars, and many footsteps had been. They stood still and listened, for the sportsman thought he heard a shout. Gerald had the sense to think of firing off the gun, which the gamekeeper, by his order, immediately did, to give notice of where they were. Afterwards they heard the voice certainly, they thought, and followed the direction of the sound. Presently they saw a black

spot on the snow at a distance; it was, as they guessed, a boy's hat, and, making up towards it, they saw the boy running to meet them, barelegged, barebreasted, coat and waistcoat off, as little as could be on, and that little as wet as possible, his face and head as red as fire, perspiring all over. He gasped, and could not speak; but, catching hold of Gerald's arm, and pointing in the direction from whence he came, pulled him on.

"Your sheep, I suppose?" said Gerald.

"Ay, in the snow," said the gamekeeper, "that can't get out. Is that it, Georgy? Speak now."

"My sheep—och!" said the boy, "an' I wish to my life it was only that same."

"What, then, can't you speak, you born natural?" said the impatient gamekeeper.

"Come on, come on! I can't be staying to tell you," said the boy, trotting on before them, in one even fast trot, with which Gerald's run and Carroll's strides could scarcely keep pace.

"Manners then, you running dripping-pan!" cried Carroll; "can't you stop and turn, and tell Master Gerald about it—Oh! if I could reach you!"—

## Chapter IV—*The Buried Hut*

Gerald, without questioning more, ran on, till the boy stopped and spoke—

"See here, master," said he, pointing to a place where he had been digging in the snow, "below here is a cabin of some kind, and a living cratur in it—I heard the cry. Stoop down yourselves here at the top of the bank, and through the hole here you may catch the sound of the moaning. I was walking on the hard snow, sir, on the top of the ditch here, as I know by the trees on the hedge, thinking of nothing at all but my sheep, and prodding about with my shovel, which by great luck I had with me on account of the sheep; when I started to

see smoke coming up a yard from me, and when I went up close to the hole, that proved a chimney, and darkening it over I suppose, by looking down to see whether I could see any thing that was in it, whoever was within knew by the stopping of the light that I was there above, for there was a great cry raised to me, 'for God's sake to help!' So I gave up all thought of my sheep, and fell to work to get out the poor cratur, and I have been at it ever since; but, see, the door can't be got open yet, nor won't for a long while; see, sir, how it is."

Where the boy had been digging in the snow, part of a thatched roof was visible. It seemed to belong to a hut or shed made in a deep ditch, or quarry hole, by the side of a hill. Gerald called loudly, as he leaned over the opening at top, and was answered by a feeble voice, which he thought was that of a woman. He stood still to consider what should be done first. The gamekeeper, unable to think, went on talking and wondering who the woman could be. Gerald saw that, as there was but one shovel, but one person could work at a time in clearing away the snow; and, as the man was the strongest, he yielded the shovel to him, but directed him not to go on where the boy had been working, because he saw that it would take a long time to clear away the snow to the bottom, and to open space enough in the hard snow-drift, so that the house door could be got open, and that it would be easier and quicker to clear the snow from part of the roof, and pull off the thatch. He bid Carroll shovel away as fast as he could, while he considered what he should do with the woman if he got her out. He must have some means of carrying her out of the cold directly, to where she could have assistance and food. The nearest house which was within reach was Mrs. Crofton's. He bid George go home to his grandmother, and send his father, or any man he could find about the house, with a hand-barrow, and dry straw, and a blanket. If the hand-barrow could not be had directly, the

men should bring a door, which George knew could be readily taken off its hinges.—The sending George home he saw too was necessary for him, for he was almost exhausted; he could walk, but could scarcely have used his arms any more. George was very unwilling to quit, but Gerald told him that, by so doing, he would do the best for the poor people he had worked so hard to save—the only chance it would give of saving them. The boy gave up to their reason, and Gerald wrote with a pencil on the back of a letter a few lines to his mother, to tell what had happened, and to beg she would send directions and assistance (the good housekeeper herself if she could) to Mrs. Crofton's cottage, to be ready, and wait till he should come. Off went George, putting the pencil note in the crown of his hat, the only dry spot about him.

### Chapter V—*A Discovery*

The corner of the roof being soon cleared of snow, Gerald helped to tear away the thatch, and soon got open a hole in the roof, through which they could see down into the house. Gerald saw the haggard face and skeleton figure of the woman. She was kneeling just under them, looking up, her hands uplifted towards them—something in her arms pressed close to her—it was her infant, but it made no cry—nor did she speak, or utter any sound. Her other children were on the ground before her—one stretched out face downwards, motionless—the other, with its arms clasped round its mother as she knelt, its head leaning against her—it never looked up. Gerald tore the hole open larger; and, bidding Carroll tell him the moment any one from Crofton's was in sight, jumped down into this den of misery—of famine. The woman's eyes turned to the child on the floor—a boy—her eldest—who was dead. The girl, kneeling, never moved till her mother lifted up her head, and Gerald saw her starved face. Her eyes blinked and closed from the

light. She showed no emotion at sight of Gerald; but in the woman's wild stare at him there was a sort of agony of hope. He recollected what he had till this moment forgotten, that he had had the day before, when he went out, a biscuit in his pocket. He felt, and found some fragments; he moistened a bit in his mouth, and then put the least morsel possible into the mouth of the girl, and then gave a bit to the woman, who instantly put a crumb of it between the infant's lips, and then she looked ravenously for more. Luckily he had very little more left. Gerald had heard that famished persons must be allowed food only with great caution; but he did not know how very small a quantity the stomach can bear, and how extremely dangerous it is to yield to the cravings of the appetite. When he saw the magical revival produced by this little, he regretted that he had not more, especially when the mother looked upon him with ravenous eagerness. He emptied his pockets, and she snatched the least crumb, and crammed it into her baby's mouth. Well for her and her children it was that he had no more. Some of the snow from the roof hung down; she stretched out her hand for it with anxiety, and when he reached it for her, swallowed as much as he would let her, but he was afraid, and stopped her. She submitted without speaking.

Carroll gave the signal agreed upon, that he saw somebody coming. Gerald had bid Carroll not call loudly to him, lest the suddenness of the certainty of her deliverance might be too much for her all at once. When he moved from her, though only a pace or two, to hear what was said from the opening in the roof, she caught hold of his coat, and held it clenched fast, as if in dread of his leaving her. He assured her that he would not desert her; that he was only going to see how best to get her out of this horrible place. His words seemed scarcely to reach her understanding; but she loosened her grasp, as if resigned. He stood upon the only piece of furniture in the house,

an old stool, and could then hear Carroll tell him, in a low voice, that two men were coming across the field from the road, either with a hand-barrow or something of the kind. It proved to be the very door which Gerald had desired should be sent if nothing else was at hand. "And a good thought it was," said the men, "for the hand-barrow had been lent to some person, and could not have been had unless we were to have waited an hour." There was plenty of straw, and a blanket, moreover a bed, a chaff bed; all he required good Molly had sent, with her blessing for the sending home her boy, and a bed should be ready and warm for the poor woman, whoever she was. She would not let George come back with the men, which he wanted to do.

While all this was saying, Gerald had lifted the kneeling girl from the floor. She was as helpless and cumbersome to lift as a child asleep. He purposed to stand upon the stool, to give her out of his arms to Carroll, who was waiting to take her, but as he sprang up on the stool, one of the legs gave way, and down he came with the child. An exclamation, the first she had uttered, burst from the mother, and she sprang forward. Gerald fell back against the wall, and held the child safe; it was a mercy that he did not fall upon it. He next took off the silk handkerchief that was round his neck; and, having tied it to his pocket handkerchief, he passed them under the arms of the child. Then calling to Carroll, he bid him let down to him one end of his leathern belt, and to hold fast the other. After fastening the end of the belt to the handkerchiefs, he called to Carroll again to draw up gently; and, guiding the child's body up as high as he could reach, it was thus drawn out safely. The woman had a tattered blanket hanging over part of her, but she could not be wrapped in it; it was all in rags, and would not hold. Gerald had the blanket old Molly had sent put down to him, and wrapping the woman in it with Carroll's help, he

having now jumped down into the hut, fastened the belt round her, and one of the men above drew her up with her infant in her arms. They laid her upon the bed, and found she had fainted. She looked so ghastly that Gerald thought she was dead. He took her infant from her powerless arm, and thought it was gone too. It seemed to have no weight; but the fresh air made it utter a sort of cry, and the mother opened her eyes, and came back from her fainting fit. Gerald laid her infant in her arms again, and she felt that he placed her girl beside her, and she gave him a look which he could never forget. But the expression of feeling and sense was gone in a moment. He wrapped the blanket round her and the children, and she lay motionless in a sort of stupor, as they lifted the board from the ground and moved on. He had little hope that she or the children could live till they reached the cottage. He had never seen any thing like such a sight before; but Carroll had, and he kept up his hopes with the prophecy, often repeated as they went along, that the woman would, as he'd see, do very well, and the childer would *come to*, all but the poor boy, who was gone quite. It lay at her feet, wrapped in the poor mother's rag of a blanket, so as to be concealed from sight. Gerald had been unwilling to remove the corpse at first, thinking it might shock the mother fatally to see it when she returned to sense. But the men would not let him leave it, telling him that when she came to her sense, it would be the first thing she would ask for, and that it should *not be waked* properly.

They reached the cottage, where, to Gerald's great joy, he found that his mother had sent the housekeeper, and all that could be wanted. Molly, dear good Molly, had the bed ready warm to put *her* into, and hot flannels for the *childer*, and warm drink, but to be given only in tea spoonfuls. "Mind," as the housekeeper said, "mind that for your life! And now, Master Gerald, my heart's life," continued she, "rest yourself.

Oh dear! oh dear! what a way he is in! my *own* child—Oh dear! oh dear! he ought to be in his own bed—and has not eat one bit the day, barring the potatoes here."

Molly followed Gerald about, while he helped in all the arrangements that were making in bringing in his charge, and carrying them to the inner room; and whenever she could find an opportunity, popped a bit of something into his mouth, which, to oblige her, he swallowed, though he did not well know what it was. All being now done by him in which he could be useful, he prepared to go home, the housekeeper and Molly urging that his own family must be anxious to see him. Away he went, but not before he had asked for George, to rejoice with him in their success. George was in his bed fast asleep; it would be a sin, his grandmother said, to waken him, and it would do better next morning, for he was tired out of his sense, stupid-tired. "He is never very 'cute, my poor Georgy, but as kind a heart as can be, asleep or awake."

## PART II

### Chapter VI—*Castle Gerald*

It was dusk in the evening before Gerald reached home. Candles were lighted at Castle Gerald, as he saw through the windows. As he approached, the lights flitted from the drawing-room windows along the corridor, as he went up the avenue, and the hall-door opened before he reached it. Cecilia, his dear little sister, ran down the steps to meet him, and his father and mother were in the hall. The comfortable, happy appearance of every thing at home, being in sudden contrast with all he had just seen and felt, struck him forcibly. The common dinner seemed to him uncommonly good; every thing a luxury. Cecilia could not help laughing; he seemed to wonder, as if he was in a dream—and so, in truth, he felt. They wisely let him

eat, and rest before they asked him any questions. Even Cecilia refrained, though her eyes, as plainly as they could speak, and very plainly that was, spoke her curiosity, or rather her sympathy. His after dinner story, however, was provokingly short—quite an unvarnished tale, and not unfolded regularly, but opened in the middle, and finished abruptly with "That's all." Whether it was that he did not like to make much of what he had done himself, to make little *i* the hero of his tale, or whether he was, as old Molly said of George, *stupid-tired*, he certainly was in an unusual hurry to take his mother's advice that night, and go to bed early. After thanking God that the woman was saved, he threw himself into his bed, thinking that he *would* be asleep the very instant his head should be on the pillow. But in vain he snugged himself up; he found that the going to sleep did not depend on his will. Whenever he closed his eyes, the images of the starved woman and her dead and living child were before him, the whole scene going on over and over again, but more and more confusedly, till at last, after the hundredth turning to the other side, he lay still, and by the time his mother came to look at him, before she went to bed, he was sound asleep—so fast that the light of her lamp, even when she no longer shaded it by her hand, never made eyelid shrink or eyelash twinkle.

The next morning, he wakened as fresh and lively as ever, and jumped up to see what sort of a day it was. Pouring rain! —all the snow gone, or going—impossible to reach the cottage before breakfast. But the housekeeper had brought word late last night, after he was asleep, that the woman and her children were likely to do well. The gamekeeper (bless his old bones for it!) was up, and at Mrs. Crofton's by the flight of night, and his report at breakfast time said that "the woman was wonderful—for so great a skeleton—a perfect 'atomy—a very shadow of a cratur—such as never was seen afore alive on God's

earth. The childer too! no weight, if you'd take 'em in your arms, it would frighten you to hold them—so unnatural-like as if they had been changed by the fairies. Howsomedever the housekeeper says they'll come to, and get weighty enough in time, ma'am, and that all will live, no doubt, if they don't get food too plenty; I mean if old Molly (Mrs. Crofton, I ax her pardon) wouldn't be in too great a hurry to feed 'em up—and if the mother, who is cautious enough not to infringe against the orders she got, as far as her own fasting is concerned, would not, as I dread, be too tender in regard to the childer—the baby, more especially."

Gerald's report in the middle of the day was good. He could not, however, see the poor woman, she and her children being in bed. It was settled that they should all walk to the cottage next morning; but the next morning and the next day, rain—rain—rain. How provoking! Yet such things will be in Ireland. Little Cecilia stood at the window, saying, "Rain, rain, go to Spain;" yet not till the fourth day did it go, and then the ground was so wet; even on the gravel walks before the window there were such puddles of yellow water, that it was vain for Cecilia to hope she could reach the cottage. But the next day was dry; a frost came, not a bitter frost, but a fine sunshiny day; and before the ground was softened by the sun, they accomplished their walk.

## Chapter VII—*The Cottage Revisited*

Every thing is for the best—that's certain—even the rain. These three days' delay had given time for much to pass which it was well should be over. The dead child was buried; the living had now some appearance of life; the horrible ghastliness was gone; the livid purple was now only deadly pale. Cecilia thought it very shocking still, but nothing to what it was, Gerald said. He was quite astonished at the difference; he

should not have known the woman to be the same, except by her skeleton hands and arms. But she was now clean, decently clothed, a great handkerchief of Molly's pinned so as to cover her wasted form, and a smile on those lips that he thought never could smile again—but they smiled on him, and then she burst into tears—the first she had shed—and a great relief they were to her, for she could not cry when the boy was buried—not a tear. Gerald looked about for the other child—the girl—she was behind him. Though she had been quite insensible, as he thought, to all that had happened, she now seemed perfectly to recognise him. When her mother drew her forward, she remained willingly fixed close beside him, and stood staring up with grateful, loving eyes. She smelled his coat; the mother reproved her, but Cecilia said, "Let her alone;" and the child, heeding neither of them, proceeded to smell his hand, took it, and kissed it again and again. Then, turning to the mother, said, "Mammy! that's the hand—the good hand."

Then she pointed to a bit of biscuit which lay upon the table, and her mother said, "The child recollects, sir, the bit you put into her mouth. She could eat that biscuit all day long, I believe, if we would let her."

"And it is hard to deny her," said Molly, putting a piece within her reach. She devoured it eagerly, yet seemed as if she had half a mind to take the last bit from her mouth, and put it into Gerald's.

He turned to shake hands with George, who now came in; and inquired if he had heard any news of his lost sheep?

"Answer, George, dear," said Molly to the boy, who was a little bashful, or, as she expressed it, "a little daunted before the ladies." "But speak out, Georgy, love, can't ye, so as to be heard, and not with that voice of a mouse. You can speak out well enough when you please."

The snow-woman observed that she knew better than any

body how well he could speak out. "I never in my born days heard a voice so pleasant as his'n sounded to me the first time I heard it, when he answered to my call for help."

George smiled through his blush; and then answering Master Gerald, thanked him kindly, and said that he had heard of his sheep—he had got him—and he was dead—frozen dead under the snow—standing—not half a perch from where they had been shoveling. When the thaw came, there he was found quite ready; so he brought him home and skinned him. There was his skin hanging up to the fore on the stable wall. And his father was very good too, and was not mad with him at all at all, but quite considerate, and did not give him a stroke nor a word; and so he (George) had promised to make up the *differ*, by not rising out of his father's hands the price of the new *shuit* which he was to get at Easter for herding the other sheep and cattle through the winter. "There's the bargain I made with him, and all's well as afore."

Cecilia, who was listening, did not at first understand this bargain; but when the *new shuit* was explained to mean a new suit of clothes, and making up *the differ*, making up the difference to the father between the value of the lost live sheep and his remaining skin, Cecilia thought it was rather a hard bargain for George, but he was quite satisfied.

Molly whispered, "Never heed, miss; the father will not be as hard upon him as he thinks. But," added she aloud, "why should not he, miss, be at the loss of his own carelessness?—Not but what, barring the giddiness, he's as good a natur'd lad as ever lived—only not over-burthened with sense.—Kind gran'mother for him!" concluded she, half laughing at herself, half at him.

Then, drawing Gerald aside, she changed her tone, and with a serious look, in a mysterious whisper, said, "You were right, dear, from first to last, concerning the poor cratur's dead child;

she did not want to have it *waked* at all, for she is not that way —not an Irishwoman at all—an Englishwoman all over, as I knew by her speech the first word ever I heard her speak in her own nat'ral tongue when she came to her voice. But hush't! there she is telling her own story to the master and mistress."

### Chapter VIII—*The Snow-Woman's Story*

"Yes, madam, I bees an Englishwoman, though so low now and untidy like—it's a shame to think of it—a Manchester woman, ma'am—and my people was once in a bettermost sort of way—but sore pinched latterly." She sighed, and paused. "I married an Irishman, madam," continued she, and sighed again.

"I hope he gave you no reason to sigh," said Gerald's father.

"Ah! no, sir, never!" answered the Englishwoman, with a faint sweet smile: "Brian Dermody is a good man, and was always a koind husband to me, as far and as long as ever he could, I will say that—but my friends misliked him—no help for it. He is a soldier, sir,—of the forty-fifth. So I followed my husband's fortins, as nat'ral, through the world, till he was ordered to Ireland. Then he brought the children over, and settled us down there at Bogafin in a little shop with his mother—a widow. She was very koind too. But no need to tire you with telling all. She married again, ma'am, a man young enough to be her son—a nice man he was to look at too—a gentleman's servant he had been. Then they set up in a public-house. Then the whiskey, ma'am, that they bees all so fond of—he took to drinking it in the morning even, ma'am—and that was bad, to my thinking."

"Ay, indeed!" said Molly, with a groan of sympathy; "oh the whiskey! if men could keep from it!"

"And if women could!" said Mr. Crofton in a low voice.

The Englishwoman looked up at him, and then looked down, refraining from assent to his smile.

"My mother-in-law," continued she, "was very koind to me all along, as far as she could. But one thing she could not do; that was, to pay me back the money of husband's and mine that I lent her. I thought this odd of her—and hard. But then I did not know the ways of the country in regard to never paying debts."

"Sure it's not the ways of all Ireland, my dear," said Molly; "and it's only them that has not that can't pay—how can they?"

"I don't know—it is not for me to say," said the Englishwoman, reservedly; "I am a stranger. But I thought if they could not pay me, they need not have kept a jaunting car."

"Is it a jaunting car?" cried Molly. She pushed from her the chair on which she was leaning—"Jaunting car bodies! and not to pay you!—I give them up intirely. Ill used you were, my poor Mrs. Dermody—and a shame! and you a stranger!—But them were Connaught people. I ask your pardon—finish your story."

"It is finished, ma'am. They were ruined, and all sold; and I could not stay with my children to be a burthen. I wrote to husband, and he wrote me word to make my way to Dublin, if I could, to a cousin of his in Pill Lane—here's the direction—and that if he can get leave from his colonel, who is a good gentleman, he will be over to settle me somewhere, to get my bread honest in a little shop, or some way. I am used to work and hardship; so I don't mind. Brian was very koind in his letter, and sent me all he had—a pound, ma'am—and I set out on my journey on foot, with the three children. The people on the road were very koind and hospitable indeed; I have nothing to say against the Irish for that; they are more hospitabler a deal than in England, though not always so honest. Stranger as I was, I got on very well till I came to the little village here hard by, where my poor boy that is gone first fell sick of the

measles. His sickness, and the 'pot'ecary' stuff and all, and the lodging and living ran me very low. But I paid all, every farthing; and let none know how poor I was, for I was ashamed, you know, ma'am, or I am sure they would have helped me, for they are a koind people, I will say that for them, and ought so to do, I am sure. Well, I pawned some of my things, my cloak even, and my silk bonnet, to pay honest; and as I could not do no otherwise, I left them in pawn, and, with the little money I raised, I set out forwards on my road to Dublin again, so soon as I thought my boy was able to travel. I reckoned too much upon his strength. We had got but a few miles from the village when he drooped, and could not get on; and I was unwilling and ashamed to turn back, having so little to pay for lodgings. I saw a kind of hut, or shed, by the side of a hill. There was nobody in it. It was empty of every thing but some straw, and a few turf, the remains of a fire. I thought there would be no harm in taking shelter in it for my children and myself for the night. The people never came back to whom it belonged, and the next day my poor boy was worse; he had a fever this time. Then the snow came on. We had some little store of provisions that had been made up for us for the journey to Dublin, else we must have perished when we were snowed up. I am sure the people in the village never know'd that we were in that hut, or they would have come to help us, for they bees very koind people. There must have been a day and a night that passed, I think, of which I know nothing. It was all a dream. When I got up from my illness, I found my boy dead—and the others with famished looks. Then I had to see them faint with hunger."

The poor woman had told her story without any attempt to make it pathetic, and thus far without apparent emotion or change of voice: but when she came to this part, and spoke of her children, her voice changed and failed, she could only add,

looking at Gerald, "You know the rest, master, Heaven bless you!"

All she had told was true, as was proved upon inquiry, in Gerald's town of the people at whose house she had lodged, and those to whom she had paid bills, and with whom she had pawned her clothes. Her friends at Manchester were written to by Gerald's father; their answer confirmed her account of herself and of her husband.

Gerald and Cecilia rejoiced in having her exactness in truth thus proved; not that they had ever doubted it, but the housekeeper had been imposed upon by some travelling people lately, and they were glad that she saw that their *Snow-woman* was not a beggar or impostor. Impostor, indeed, she could not be, poor creature, as to the main parts of her story, her being buried alive in the snow, and nearly famished. Every thing they saw of her during the time she staid at Crofton's cottage increased the interest they felt for her—she was so grateful—so little encroaching—so industrious; as soon as ever she was able, in fact, before she was well able, she set about doing needlework for Mrs. Crofton. But Molly, as she told Gerald, would not take her work from her without payment, "I only shammed taking the work from her for nothing, dear, not to vex her, but I counted up what she earned unknown'st to her, and see what I did (opening a chest), I got all her little *duds* back out of pawn—the black silk bonnet and all, which (added Molly, laughing), to the best of my opinion, is next to her children and husband, perhaps, what she is the fondest of in this life. Well, and even so, so much the greater the cratur's honesty, you know, that did not begrudge to give it off her head to pay her dues to the last farthing. By the same token she is as welcome as light to stay here with us till she's quite stout, and as long as she pleases, her and her's—if it were a twelvemonth."

This permission was no trifling kindness, for the house was so small that Mrs. Crofton, who loved to have it neat too, was much inconvenienced by her guests; she gave up her own bed and room to them, and slept in the kitchen. Molly was a true Irish hospitable soul, who would never count up or tell or hear tell of what she gave or lost. She would not accept of any payment for her lodgers from Gerald's father or mother, or remuneration in any form. Whatever was sent from the Castle was scrupulously set apart for the use of the *Snow-woman* and her children, or kept for them till it spoiled. Many times the woman, afraid of being a burthen, said she was well enough, quite well enough, to be stirring.

## Chapter IX—*Perplexity*

One day, after they had heard the poor woman declare that she was well able to go, Cecilia, as she was walking home, said to her brother, "Gerald, how very sorry that poor woman must be to get *quite* well; I remember I was very sorry to get quite well after my measles, because I knew that I should not have mamma and every body waiting upon me, and caring for me so very, very much. But then how dreadfully more your snow-woman must feel this—when all the wonder of her being buried alive is over, when we have no more questions to ask, and no more walking every day to see her, and no more pitying, and no more biscuits and broth and tea, and all manner of good things; and she must leave her warm bed, and Molly's comfortable house, and be turned out, as Molly says, into the cold wide world—and her children, one of them to be carried all the way, and the other to go barefoot. Gerald, at least I may give her a pair of my old shoes." "But that will do little good," said Gerald, sighing, and he seldom sighed.

"I wish I could do more," said Cecilia, "but I have nothing. Oh! how I wish I could do something, mamma."

"You can make some warm clothes for the children, as you proposed yesterday, and I will give you flannel and whatever you want, Cecilia."

"Thank you, mamma; and you will cut them out, and I will work all day without stirring, mamma, or ever looking up till I have done. But even then it will be so very little compared with all she wants."

Cecilia now sighed more deeply than Gerald had sighed before.

"Gerald," she resumed, "I wish I was a fairy, even for one day, a good fairy, I mean."

"Good, of course; you could not be bad, Cecilia. Well, what would you do in that one day? I am curious to know whether it is the same thing that I am thinking of."

"No," said Cecilia, "it cannot be, because I am thinking, my dear, of so many different things. But, in the first place, I would wave my wand and in a minute have a nice house raised, like Molly's, for the snow-woman."

"The very thing! I knew it," cried Gerald. "Oh, Cecilia, if it could be!"

"There are no fairies left now in the world," said Cecilia mournfully; "that's all nonsense indeed."

"But I can tell you, Cecilia, there is still in the world what can do almost all that the fairies could do formerly, at least as to building houses, only not so quick quite—money."

"I guessed it before you came to the word 'Cecilia;' but what signifies that, I have no money—have you?"

"Some, but very little," said Gerald, feeling in his pocket, "too little, only pocket money. Oh, I wish, how I wish, Cecilia, I had as much money as papa has, or mamma," added he, stopping till they, who were walking behind them, came within hearing, and repeating his wish, added, "then I could do so much good."

"And if you had as much money as we have," said his mother, smiling, "you would want more to be able to do all the good you desire."

His father asked him to tell him what good in particular he thought he could do, and as they walked on Gerald stated, that in particular he would build, or buy a house ready built, "for the snow-woman."

"And furnished," interposed Cecilia.

"No, leave out the furniture for the present," said Gerald, "we cannot do every thing, I know, papa, at once. But seriously, papa, you have built houses for many of the tenants, and you have houses, cottages, one cottage at least, even now, to give to whoever you please, or whoever pleases you."

"Not exactly to whoever I please, or to whoever pleases me, but to those whom I think most deserving, and to those whom justice calls upon me to prefer. I have claims upon me from good old tenants, or their families, for every house I have to give or to let. How then can I give to a stranger, who has no claims upon me, merely to please myself or you?"

"But she has the claim of being very wretched," said Gerald.

"And she has been buried in the snow," said Cecilia.

"And has been recovered," said her father.

"There's the worst of it," said Cecilia, "for now she is recovered she must go. We cannot help it, if we were to talk about it ever so much. But, mamma, though papa says people have never money enough to do all the good they wish, I think you have, for I remember about that cottage you built last year, you said, I recollect perfectly hearing you say the words, 'I know the way I can manage to have money enough to do it.' What did you mean, mamma,—as you were not a fairy, how did you manage?"

Her mother smiled, but did not answer.

"I will tell you," said her father, "the way in which she

managed, and the only way in which people, let them have ever such large fortunes, can manage to be sure of having money enough to do what they wish most—she denied herself something that she would have liked to buy, but that she could do without—she very much wished at the time you speak of, Cecilia, to have bought a harp, on which she knew that I should have liked to hear her play."

"I remember that too," cried Cecilia, "I remember the harp was brought for her to look at, and she liked it exceedingly; and then, after all, she sent it away and would not buy it, and I wondered."

"She could not have bought the harp and have built the cottage; so she denied herself the harp that year, and she made her old woman, as you call her, happy for life."

"How very good!" said Cecilia.

Gerald fell into a profound silence, which lasted all the remainder of their walk home, till they reached the lodge at the entrance, when, opening the gate, he let his mother and sister pass, but arrested his father in his passage:—"Father! I have something to say to you, will you *walk behind*?"

"Son, I am ready to listen to you, and I will do any thing in my power to oblige you, but you must explain to me how I am to walk behind."

"Oh, papa, you know what I mean; let mamma and Cecilia walk on, so as to be out of hearing, and we can follow behind. What I am thinking of, papa, is Garry Owen; you were so kind as to promise to buy him for me."

"Yes, as a reward which you deserved for your perseverance last year."

"Thank you, papa; but suppose, instead of Garry Owen—in short, suppose, papa, I were to give up Garry Owen."

"To give up Garry Owen!" exclaimed his father, starting back with surprise.

"I am not sure, papa, that I can bring myself to do it yet, I am only considering, therefore pray do not tell Cecilia or mamma. I want first to settle my own mind. If I were to give up Garry Owen, would you allow me to have the money which you would have paid for him, and let me do what I please with it?"

"Undoubtedly. But since you consult me, I strongly recommend it to you not to give up Garry Owen for any other horse or pony."

"For any other horse, certainly not, for I like him better than any other that I ever saw or heard of—the beautiful creature!" cried Gerald enthusiastically. "But if I could give him up, father, as mamma gave up the harp, would the price of him build a cottage for the snow-woman? And would you do it for me?"

His father's countenance brightened delightfully as Gerald spoke. "Would I do it for you, my son!" said he, but checking himself, he added, in a composed voice, "I would, Gerald. But are you sure that you would wish this to be done, that is the first point to be settled. Remember, that for this year to come I certainly shall not buy for you any other horse if you give up Garry Owen for this purpose: you must understand this clearly, and be prepared to abide by all the consequences of your own determination."

"Oh certainly, sir, I understand all that perfectly, I know it must be Garry Owen or the snow-woman, I never thought of any thing else; it would be cheating you or cheating myself. But I have not come to my determination yet, remember that, father, and do not say that I go back—you understand."

"I understand you, Gerald, as well as you understand me; so we need say no more about it till you have settled your mind."

Which he was called upon to do sooner than he expected. Before he had considered all the pros and cons, before he had

screwed his courage to the sticking place, he was summoned to the fight; and well might his father fear that he would not come off victor of himself.

"Oh, Gerald!" cried Cecilia, running back to meet him, "Garry Owen is come! Garry Owen is come! that horse dealer man has brought him for you—yes, Garry Owen, I assure you I saw him in the back lawn: they are all looking at him, mamma too! Come, come! Run, run!"

## PART III

### Chapter X—*Garry Owen*

In the back lawn was a group of people, the groom, the helper, the gossoon, the coachman, and, distinguished above the rest, the saddler, with a new saddle on his back, and a side-saddle and bridle and bits glittering and hanging about him in most admired disorder. The group opened on Gerald's approach, and full in the midst, on a rising ground, with the light of the setting sun upon him, stood Garry Owen, his present master the horse dealer beside him, holding his bridle as he curved his neck proudly. Garry Owen was of a dark iron gray, with black mane, tail, and legs.

"Such a pretty colour," said Cecilia, "and such a fine flowing tail—oh, what a wisk he gave it!"

"A remarkably pretty head," said Gerald, "is not it, father?"

"And how gently he puts it down to let mamma stroke it," said Cecilia; "dear nice little creature, I may pat him, may not I?"

"You may, miss; he is as gentle as the lamb, see, and as powerful as the lion," said the horse dealer; "but it's the spirit that's in him will please Master Gerald above all."

"Yes, I do like a horse that has some spirit," cried Gerald, vaulting upon his back.

"Then there it is! just suited! for it's he that has spirit enough for you, and you that has the spirit for him, Master Gerald.—See how he sits him!"

"Without a saddle or a ha'porth!" said the saddler.

"What need, with such a seat on a horse as Master Gerald has got, and such command."

"Let him go," said Gerald.

"Take care," said Cecilia.

"Never fear, miss," said the horse dealer; and off Gerald went in a fine canter.

"No fear of Master Gerald. See, see, see! See there now!" continued the master of the horse triumphantly, as Gerald, who really rode extremely well for a boy of his age, cantered, trotted, walked alternately, and showed all Garry Owen's paces to the best advantage. Suddenly a halloo was heard, huntsmen in red jackets appeared galloping across the adjoining field, returning from the hunt; Garry Owen and Gerald leaped the ditch instantly.

"Oh! oh!" cried Cecilia, "is the horse running away with him?"

"Not at all, miss—no fear—for Master Gerald has none. See there, how he goes. Oh prince o' ponies! Oh king of glory! See, up he is now with the red jackets—dash at all—over he goes—the finest leaper in the three counties—clears all before him, see!—there's a leap! and now, miss, see how is he bringing him back now to us, fair and *asy* see! trotting him up as if nothing at all; then I declare it's a sight to see!"

Gerald came up and sat, as Garry Owen stood still in the midst of them, patting the pony, delighted with him much, and with himself not more, but certainly not a little.

"Then he's the finest rider ever I see of his years," cried the horse dealer in an ecstasy.

"The finest young gentleman rider that ever I see in all

Ireland, without comparison, I say," pronounced the saddler, shutting one eye and looking up at him with the other, with an indescribably odd, doubtful smile. In this man's countenance there was a mixed or quickly varying expression—demure, jocose, sarcastic, openly flattering, covertly laughing at the flattery, if not at the flattered; his face was one instant for the person he spoke to, the next for the bystanders. Aware at this moment who were standing by, he kept it as steady as he could. The horse dealer, in eager earnest intent on his object, continued in his ecstatic tone.

"By the laws, then, I'd sooner bestow Garry Owen on Master Gerald than sell him at any price to any other."

As Master Gerald's father smiled somewhat incredulous, perhaps a little scornfully, the horse dealer instantly softened his assertion, by adding:—"I should not say bestow, a poor man like me could not go to bestow, but I'd sooner sell him any price to Master Gerald, so I would, and not a word of lie, than to any mortal living in the three counties, or three kingdoms entirely—and rason, for it's Master Gerald that would do Garry Owen most justice, and would show him off best; the fine horse should get the fine rider, and 'tis undeniable the young gentleman is that same any how."

"Kind father for him," said the gamekeeper; "and the very moral of the master, Master Gerald is. The very sit of the father when first I seen him on a horse. Then may he be like him in all."

"And 'specially in having a good horse always under him," said the horse dealer. "Who would have a right to the *raal* good horse but the raal good gentleman born?"

"Which the family is, and was from father to son time out of mind, as all the world knows and says as well as myself," added the saddler. "Father and son seldom comes a better."

## Chapter XI—*Good Resolutions*

Gerald's father, who had been for some time pacing up and down impatiently during this flow of flattery, had been more than once tempted to interrupt it. Disgusted and vexed as he was, and afraid that his son would be duped and swayed from his good purpose, he could hardly refrain from interference. But he said to himself, "My son must meet with flatterers, he should learn early to detect and resist flattery. I will leave him to himself."

"Father, are you gone? are you going?" cried Gerald, "I want to consult you. Will you not help me with your judgment?"

"You know my opinion of the horse, my dear Gerald," said his father; "as to the rest, I must leave you to yourself.—The money is ready for you."

As he spoke he took Cecilia by the hand to lead her away, but she looked as if she had a great mind to see more of Garry Owen.

"Pray, papa, let me stay," said Cecilia, "with mamma; mamma will walk up and down."

Her father let go her hand and walked away.

"May be Miss Cecilia could ride this pony too?" said the groom respectfully to Gerald.

"To be sure," said the horse dealer; "put her up, and you'll see how considerate Garry Owen will walk with the young lady."

Cecilia mounted on Garry Owen was led twice round the back lawn, Gerald delighting in her delight.

"And the young lady is a great soldier too," said the horse dealer.

"I did not feel the least bit afraid," said she, as she jumped down, and patting Garry Owen now with fearless loud re-

sounding pat, she pronounced him the gentlest of dear little creatures, and "oh how glad I am," continued she, "that you are to belong to brother Gerald; many, many, many a pleasant ride I shall have upon you, Garry Owen—shall not I, Gerald?"

Gerald smiled; I cannot resist this, thought he, I must have Garry Owen.

"The only thing I don't like about him is his name, Gerald; I wish, when you have him, you would call him by some prettier name than Garry Owen—call him Fairy, Good Fairy."

"Or talking of fairies and fairy horses, if you had a mind to an odd Irish name, Miss Cecilia," said the gamekeeper, "you might call him Boliaunbuie, which is the Irish name for the yellow rag weed that they call 'the fairies' horses,' because the fairies ride on them time immemorial."

While the gamekeeper was making out some fitness in this conceit, which struck his own fancy, but nobody else's, perhaps, the housekeeper came out to give to her mistress some message, in which the name of the snow-woman (a name which had been adopted below stairs as well as above) was often repeated.

"What! do you say that she is going tomorrow?" inquired Gerald.

"No sir, but the day after she has fixed, and will come up here to take leave and thank all the family to-morrow. A grateful creature, ma'am, and not encroaching she is, as ever breathed, not expecting and expecting, like the rest, or too many of them. I've promised to buy from her some of the little worsted mittins and gloves she has been knitting, to put a few pence in her poor pocket."

This speech brought back all Gerald's thoughts from Garry Owen to the poor woman. He turned his back on the pony, took Cecilia aside, abruptly opened the matter to her, and asked if she could be contented if he should give up Garry Owen.

It was a sudden change. "Oh, could there be no other way?"

"None."

"Well, dear Gerald, do it then; oh never mind me! I am only sorry for your not having the beautiful pony; but then it will be so good of you—yes—yes—do it, Gerald, do it."

## Chapter XII—*Self-Denial*

The generous eagerness with which Cecilia urged him acted directly against her purpose, for he felt particularly sorry to give up what would be such a pleasure to her. With uncertain steps and slow he walked back again to those who waited his decision, and who stood wondering what he could be deliberating about. His speech, as well as his walk, betrayed signs of his inward agitation. It would not bear reporting; the honourable gentleman was scarcely audible—but those round Garry Owen gathered from what reached their ears that, "in short he did not know—he was not quite sure—he was not determined—or he was determined not to purchase Garry Owen, unless he should change his mind."

The auditors looked upon one another in unfeigned astonishment, and for half a minute silence ensued. The master of the horse then said in a low voice, in Irish, to the saddler, "What can be the cause? The father said he had the money for him."

The saddler, in low voice, gnawing a bit of a leather strap, without turning head or eyes as he spoke, replied, "It's the housekeeper—something she put into the ear was the cause of the change."

"Just as your honour *plaases*, Master Gerald, sir," said the horse dealer, stroking Garry's nose; "which ever way you think proper, Master Gerald," said he, in a tone in which real anger struggled and struggled in vain with habitual servility and professional art, all care for his monied interest forgotten in his sense of the insult which he conceived aimed at his horse,

and continued, as he turned to depart, "I thank my stars then Garry Owen and I can defy the world, and all the slanderers, backbiters, and whisperers in it, whomsoever they be, man, woman, or child."

Cecilia looked half frightened, Gerald wholly bewildered.

"I don't understand you," said he.

"Why, then, master, I ax your pardon. But I think it is asy understanding *me*. It's plain some person or persons have whispered through another, perhaps"—glancing towards the spot where Gerald's mother was sitting drawing the group—"something myself can't guess what, against me or Garry Owen—a sounder horse never stepped nor breathed, I could take my affidavit, but I will not demean myself, I should not be suspected, I don't deserve it from your honour; so I only wish, Master Gerald, you may find a better horse for yourself, if you can get one in all Ireland, let alone England."

He turned Garry Owen to lead him down the hill as he spoke. Gerald, feeling for the man, and pleased with his feeling for the reputation of his horse and for his own suspected honour, now stood in his way to stop him, and assured him that nothing had been said to him by any human being to the disadvantage of Garry Owen or of himself.

But prepossessed with the belief, as is but too common in Ireland, and often too just, that some one had been belying him, the indignant horse dealer went on in the same tone; but seeming afraid of failing in respect to young master, he addressed his appeal to the groom.

"Just-put-the-case-the-case-was-your-own!" Nine words which he uttered with such volubility that they sounded like one, and that one some magical adjuration. "Just-put-the-case-the-case-was-your-own, would not ye have some feeling? Then, if by the blessing of luck I had been born a gentleman, and a great young gentleman, like Master Gerald, why, in his

place, I'd give up an informer as soon and sooner than look at him, who-some-dever he was, or who-some-dever she was, for it was a she I'm confident, from a hint I got from a frind."

"Tut, tut, man!" interposed the saddler. "Now, Dan Conolly, you're out o' rason entirely, and you are not listening to Master Gerald."

"Then I am listening to his honour—only I know it is only to screen the housekeeper, who is a favourite, and was never my frind, the young gentleman spakes—and I'm jealous of that."

This was more incomprehensible than all the rest to Cecilia and Gerald. While they looked at each other in amazement, a few words were whispered in Irish by the cunning saddler to the enraged horse dealer, which brought him to reason, or to whatever portion of reason he ever had.

The words were—"I must have mistaken, may be he'll come round again, and be for the horse."

## Chapter XIII—*The Decision*

"Why then, Master Gerald, sir, I crave your pardon," said the horse dealer in a penitent tone; "if I forgot myself and was too free, then I was too hot and out of rason; I'm sensible I'm subject to it. When a gentleman, especially one of this family that I've such a respect for, and then above all, when your honour Master Gerald, would turn to suspect me—as I suspected you was suspecting me of going to tell you a lie, or misleading of you any way, about a horse of all things. But I mistook your honour—I humbly crave your honour's pardon, Master Gerald."

Gerald willingly granted his pardon, and liked him all the better for his warmth.

"About Garry Owen above all, I had no occasion to be puffing him off," continued the master of the horse, turning to

him proudly. "Then the truth is, it was only to oblige you, Master Gerald, and his honour your father, who was always my frind, as I ought to remember and do—it was only on that account, and my promise, that I brought Garry here *the* day, to make you the first offer at the price I first said; I won't be talking ungenteel, it does not become me; but I'd only wish your honour to know, without my mentioning it, that I could get more from many another."

"I am glad to hear that," said Gerald; "that relieves me from one difficulty—about you, Conolly."

"Oh, make no difficulty in life, my dear young gentleman, on account of me. If you have made up your mind to be off, and to give up Garry Owen, dear sir, it's done and done," said the knowing and polite horse dealer; "and 'tis I in this case will be obligated to you, for I have two honourable chaps in my eye this minute, both eager as ever you see to snap him up before I'd get home, or well out o' the great gate below; and to which-somdever of the two I'd give the preference, he would come down on the spot with whatsomdever I'd name, ready money, and five guineas luck penny to boot."

"Very well, then," said Gerald, "you had better—." But the words stuck in his throat.

"Is it Jonah Crommie, the rich grazier's son, that's one of your chaps, Dan Conolly?" asked the saddler.

The horse dealer nodded.

"Murder, man!" cried the saddler, "would you let him have Garry Owen? The like of him—the squireen! the spalpeen! the mushroom! That puts me in mind of the miller, his father, riding formerly betwix' two big sacks to the market, himself the biggest sack—Faugh! the son of the likes to be master of Garry Owen!"

"They ought not to look so high, them graziers and middle-men, I admit," said the horse dealer; "the half gentleman

might be content to be half mounted—but then there's the money."

"Best not for him to be laying it out on Garry Owen," said the saddler, "for even suppose Garry would not throw him and break his neck at the first going off, I'll tell you what would happen, Jonah Crommie would ruin Garry Owen's mouth for him in a week, and make him no better than a garron. Did any body ever see Jonah Crommie riding a horse? It's this way he does it," lugging at the bridle with the hand, and the two legs out. "It is with three stirrups he rides."

All joined in the laugh, groom, coachman, helper, gossoon and all. Garry Owen's master then protested Jonah Crommie should never ride him. But the other offer for Garry was "unexceptionable-undeniable."

"It is from Sir Essex Bligh, the member. Sir Essex wants an extraordinary fine pony for his eldest son and heir, young Sir Harry that will be; and he rides like an angel too! and what's more, like a gentleman as he is too. Accordingly, Monday morning, next hunt day, the young baronet that will be is to be introduced to the hunt, and could not be better than on Garry Owen here."

The whole hunt, in full spirit, was before Gerald's eyes, and young Sir Harry on "Garry Owen in glory." But Gerald's was not a mean mind, to be governed by the base motives of jealousy and envy. Those who tried these incentives did not know him. He now decidedly stepped forward, and patting the horse, said, "Good bye, Garry Owen, since I cannot have you, I am glad you will have a gentleman for your master, who will use you well and do you justice. Farewell for ever, Garry Owen." He put something satisfactory into the horse dealer's hand, adding, "I am sorry I have given you so much trouble. I don't want the saddle."

Then, turning suddenly away, Garry Owen was led off; and

Gerald and Cecilia hastened to their mother, who, in much surprise, inquired what had happened.

"You will be better pleased, mamma, than if Gerald had a hundred Garry Owens," cried Cecilia.

At that moment their father threw open his study window and looked out, well pleased indeed, as he saw how the affair had ended. He came out and shook Gerald by the hand with affectionate pleasure and paternal pride.—"Safe out of the hands of your flatterers, my boy, welcome to your friends! I am glad, my dear son, to see that you have self command sufficient to adhere to a generous intention, and to do the good which you purpose."

Gerald's father put a purse containing the promised price of Garry Owen into his hand, and offered to assist him in any way he might desire in executing his plan for the snow-woman. After some happy consultations it was settled, that it would be best, instead of building a new house for her, which could not be immediately ready, to rent one that was already finished, dry, and furnished, and in which they could set her up in a little shop in the village. Whatever was wanting to carry this plan into execution, Gerald's father and mother supplied. They advised that Gerald should *give* only a part of the sum he had intended, and *lend* the other part to the poor woman, to be returned by small payments at fixed periods, so that it would make a fund that might be again lent and repaid, "and thus be continually useful to her, or to some one else in distress."

"Gerald," said his father, "you may hereafter have the disposal of a considerable property, therefore I am glad, even in these your boyish days, to have any opportunity of turning your mind to consider how you can be most useful to your tenantry. I have no doubt, from your generous disposition, that you will be kind to them; but I feel particular satisfaction in seeing that you early begin to practise that self denial which is in all situations essential to real generosity."

# Notes

To the officials of many libraries I owe sincere thanks for ready coöperation in the matter of photostatic transcripts and for the courtesy of access to rare books: the Henry E. Huntington Library, the Library of Congress, the British Museum, the New York Public Library, and the library of the University of California. I wish to record, in particular, a heavier debt, incurred through the obliging service of the able librarians of the University of California at Los Angeles, who have borne up well under a bombardment of importunate requests. And to Miss Eleanor Roberts, assistant to the manager of the University Press, a final thank-you for invaluable assistance.

[1] Of *The Book of Beauty* (1838) Thackeray had this to say: "The binding of this book, by the way, is perfectly hideous—it looks like one of Lord Palmerston's cast-off waistcoats." The Oxford Thackeray: *Art Criticisms*, "A Word on the Annuals," p. 348.

[2] See John Gibson Lockhart, *Life of Scott*, 5 vols., London, 1915, II, 274.

[3] Before the *Forget-Me-Not* there had been several books which shared some of the characteristics of the annual. Notable among these was Robert Southey's *Annual Anthology*. The growth of the annuals impressed a contemporary as follows: "It struck somebody, who was acquainted with the literary annuals of Germany, and who reflected upon this winter flower-bed of the booksellers, —these pocket-books, souvenirs, and Christmas presents, all in the lump,— that he would combine the spirit of all of them, as far as labour, season, and sizeability went; and omitting the barren or blank part, and being entirely original, produce such a pocket-book as had not been yet seen. The magician in Boccaccio could not have done better. Hence arose the Forget-Me-Not, the Literary Souvenirs, the Amulets, and the Keepsakes, which combine the original contribution of the German annual with the splendid binding of the Christmas English present. Far are those for whom this article is written from undervaluing the works of their predecessors, or the contest with their rivals. It is a contest of sunbeams which shall produce the finest gems; *whose* tree, or *whose* parterre, shall burst out into a flush of more splendid blossoms." W. H. Ainsworth, "Pocket-books and Keepsakes," *The Keepsake*, London, 1828, p. 11.

[4] *The Forget-Me-Not*, London, 1822, pp. v, vi.

[5] Several "annuals" made no pretense of being seasonal gifts, but advertised themselves simply as gift books of whatever time of year, birthday, or anniversary.

[6] *The Amulet*, London, 1831, pp. iii-iv.

[7] In recent years many English periodicals have been fattened and dressed up for annual holiday appearances. Best known are *Punch's* annual "Almanack," *The Sketch*, *The Tatler*, and *The Sphere*. Most famed and longest lived is *The Children's Chatterbox*, which began in 1866, reached a high circulation mark of 160,000 in 1920, and is now, since the demise of the magazine proper, a legitimate annual.

[8] *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, ed. Alfred Ainger, 2 vols., London, 1915, II, 274.

[9] Earl of Lytton, *The Life of Edward Bulwer, First Lord Lytton*, 2 vols., London, 1913, I, 449.

[10] *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, ed. Lord John Russell, 8 vols., London, 1853-1856, V, 314. Reviewers analyzed the situation similarly: "What encouragement is there for any man of eminence to allow his productions to be choked in the midst of insufferable twaddle and mawkish absurdity? But, as the case stands, for every ten pages of readable matter we have at least ninety of frothy nothingness written by no one knows who." *Fraser's Magazine*, VI (December, 1832), 664.

[11] See Coleridge's letter to Alaric A. Watts, September 14, 1828: *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl Leslie Griggs, 2 vols., London, 1932, II, 416.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 420.

[13] *Life of Scott*, V, 176.

[14] Ruskin to W. H. Harrison, June 6, 1841: *The Works of John Ruskin*, 39 vols., London, 1909, XXXVI, 24-25. For another account of Ruskin's experiences as contributor to annuals, see his article "My First Editor: an Autobiographical Reminiscence."

[15] Oxford Thackeray: *Art Criticisms*, "A Word on the Annuals," p. 337.

[16] For a full account of Scott's negotiations with *The Keepsake*, see the entries in his journal for January 30, 1828, *et seqq.* At one point he says: "Now to become a stipendiary editor of a New-Year's Gift-Book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work for any quantity of supply to such a publication. Even the pecuniary view is not flattering, though these gentlemen meant it should be so." *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, Edinburgh, 1910, p. 531.

[17] See note 10 above: V, 272, 314-315.

[18] Coleridge to C. Aders: *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, II, 410.

[19] *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, II, 274.

[20] *Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, II, 414.

[21] See *Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey*, ed. John Wood Warter, 4 vols., London, 1856, IV, 123-125.

[22] "A Word on the Annuals," p. 338.

[23] *Art Criticisms*, "The Annuals," p. 355.

[24] *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 531 (entry for January 30, 1828).

[25] Lamb wrote this poem by request. The child was Thomas Hood's, and Mrs. Hood asked Lamb for some consoling verses. Naturally he complied. He wrote to Bernard Barton (October 11, 1828): "Yes, I am hooked into the 'Gem,' but only for some lines written on a dead infant of the Editor's, which being, as it were, his property, I could not refuse their appearing; but I hate the paper, the type, the gloss, the dandy plates, the names of contributors poked up into your eyes in first page, and whistled through all the covers of magazines, the barefaced sort of emulation, the immodest candidateship, brought into so little space—in those old 'Londons' [*London Magazine*] a signature was lost in the wood of matter, the paper coarse (till latterly, which spoiled them); in short, I detest to appear in an Annual." *The Letters of Charles Lamb*, II, 211-212.

[26] "A Word on the Annuals," p. 339.

[27] *Ibid.*, pp. 339, 346.

[28] *Shelley and Mary*, 4 vols., privately printed, 1882, p. 1192.

[29] *Barbazure*, one of the series of *Novels by Eminent Hands*, opens: "It was upon one of those balmy evenings in November which are only known in the valleys of Languedoc and among the mountains of Alsace, that two cavaliers might have been perceived by the naked eye threading one of the rocky and romantic gorges that skirt the mountain-land between the Marne and the Garonne. The rosy tints of the declining luminary were gilding the peaks and crags which lined the path, through which the horsemen wound slowly." With many readers this passage will pass current as typical of James's literary style.

[30] They are usually so termed, though erroneously. The relationship was not one of blood, but of marriage, Claire's mother having become Godwin's second wife.

[31] See my article, "*The Pole*: A Story by Claire Clairmont?" *ELH, A Journal of English Literary History*, V (March, 1938), 67-70.

[32] The author had an eye to actuality; the present story accords, where advisable, with the progress of the campaign of 1837, the place names are recognizable, and the soldiers named are real persons. Cf. the account of the campaign in P. Christian (pseudonym of Chrétien Pitois), *L'Afrique Française*, Paris, n. d. [1846], pp. 247-263. Names have been corrected by Christian's book, as

follows, chiefly in order that the reader may not hesitate over pronouncing them: Damrémont *for* Damremont; Rulhières *for* Rhullieres; Perrégaux for Perregaux; Valée for Vallée. The place names have not been corrected, except for the addition of the accent in Dréan, since all may be read well enough as they stand. Christian gives Bone, Mjez-Amar, Nechmeya, Hamman Berda, Guelma, and Ras-el-Akba, where our author has Bona, Mzez Ammar, Nech Meya, Amman Berda, Ghelma, and Rass-el-Akba.

[33] Since my introduction was written, I have discovered that "Hop-Gathering" is reprinted in an obscure and generally inaccessible collection of Miss Mitford's works (Philadelphia, 185–).

[34] Anthony Trollope, *Autobiography*, 2 vols., Edinburgh, 1883, II, 213.

[35] Collins reprinted this story under the title "Mr. Cosway and the Landlady" in his *Little Novels* (1887).

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